

The Reception of Erasmus in the Early Modern Period

Intersections

Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture

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Edited by

Karl A.E. Enenkel



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Erasmus' Vision of the Church (Kirkville: 1995), *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honour of John W. O'Malley, SJ*, with Kathleen M. Comerford (Toronto: 2001), and *Holy Scripture Speaks: Studies in the Production and Reception of Erasmus' Paraphrases on the New Testament*, with Mark Vessey (Toronto: 2002).

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INTRODUCTION – MANIFOLD READER RESPONSES:
THE RECEPTION OF ERASMUS IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

Karl Enenkel

Erasmus provides one of the most interesting cases not only for the processes of early modern image and reputation building through publishing in print,¹ but at the same time – and certainly not to a lesser degree – for the *impossibility of controlling one's reception* before an audience that was continually growing, was increasingly emancipated, heterogeneous, and fragmented, and was, above all, constantly changing. This loss of control is especially striking, since Erasmus had been so successful in building up his literary and scholarly fame by shrewdly utilizing both the hierarchical organization of early modern intellectual life and the means of the new medium of the printed book. From the second decade of the 16th century onward, Erasmus succeeded in gaining an immense, hitherto unrivalled fame spread over the whole of Latin-writing and Latin-loving Europe. Erasmus fought his crusade for fame by means of his Latin works – which he had printed at such important publishers as Josse Bade (Paris), Aldus Manutius (Venice), Johannes Froben (Basel), and Mathias Schürer (Strasbourg) – especially the *Adagia*; *De duplici copia*; his translation and paraphrases of and commentaries on the *New Testament*; his edition of Hieronymus, including a new *Life of St. Jerome*; the *Ciceronianus*; and the *Laus Stultitiae*. By their very appearance, all of these works caused serious earthquakes in intellectual life with respect to philological criticism, authentic Latin style, and religious, ethical, and social criticism.

Since Erasmus was so successful in spreading his fame all over Europe that almost all intellectuals of that era were, in some way or another, acquainted with his name (even if they did not have the opportunity to carefully study his works), one could be tempted to think that “Erasmus” or “Erasmian” became a kind of intellectual *trademark* or *brand*. That, however, would be misleading. A trademark's main characteristic is that it is registered and legally protected: Erasmus's name was neither

¹ Cf. the groundbreaking study by Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton: 1993).

registered nor protected. Thus, for some of his contemporaries, Erasmus's name meant advanced, hitherto unsurpassed and perfect humanist scholarship; for others, however, it meant unbridled and arrogant hypercriticism, even heresy, that would lead to religious upheaval and to the destruction of millennium-old sacrosanct traditions. Some saw Erasmus's name as the equivalent of the powerful *cohesive force* of the modern, humanist republic of letters, of which he was considered the prince, or even emperor; others saw it as representative of a belligerent quarreler and *polemicist* who unreasonably fought out his conflicts to the disadvantage of the common good. Some perceived the name to be the equivalent of progress in early modern religious thinking and of pious Catholic criticism; others equated it with the dangerous propagation of Lutheran thoughts; and still others (adherents of the Reformation) linked it with backward and counterproductive indecisiveness in religious matters. For some contemporaries, Erasmus's name signified a virtuoso creator of a new and authentic Latin style; for others, it represented a light-minded and even careless pen-pusher who always preferred quantity to quality. Some saw him as the great reformer of theology; for others, however, he was a complete *ignoramus* in academic theology.

The many and massive reactions to Erasmus's works and as a person, both during his lifetime and in the centuries after his death, have drawn the attention of modern scholarship and have brought forth a couple of important monographs and two collective volumes.² One of the first monographs was the groundbreaking, almost visionary, and most influential study by Marcel Bataillon on Erasmus's 'influence' in Spain in the 16th century (1937).³ From its first appearance onward, but even more so starting with its translation into Spanish (first edition 1950), Bataillon's study had an impact that surpassed the normal level of most modern scholarly works. As Silvana Seidel Menchi pointed out in a more recent assessment of the work, it seems to have contributed to the construction

² For the two collective volumes, see Mout M.E.H.N. – Smolinsky H. – Trapman J. (eds.), *Erasmianism: Idea and Reality* (Amsterdam: 1997), *Verhandelingen Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen. Afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks; Revuelta Sanudo M. – Morón Arroyo C. (eds.), El Erasmismo en España* (Santander: 1986).

³ *Erasme et l'Espagne* (Paris: 1937; new edition ed. D. Devoto – C. Amiel, 3 vols., Geneva: 1991); cf. Nuttall G.F., "Erasmus and Spain: The Vision of Marcel Bataillon", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 46 (1994) 105–113.

of 20th-century Spanish identity.⁴ Bataillon considered Erasmianism to be the most important feature of intellectual life in 16th-century Spain. Bataillon's broad spectrum of Erasmianism and its seemingly massive appearance (described in three volumes [!]), however, also show the difficulties with this way of studying Erasmus's "influence". "Influence" is indeed a problematic notion for reception research, since it is not only ultimately vague, but it also entirely neglects the active role of the reader or recipient. In fact, it prevents us from understanding the processes of reception, and it works against critical analyses. "Influence" may mean anything. Thus, small wonder that Bataillon comes to his view of Erasmianism as a *universal feature* of 16th-century Spanish culture. As Seidel Menchi rightly criticized, in Bataillon's book 'wherever one finds Greek, theology linked to humanism, attempts at mediation between various confessional orientations, there is Erasmianism. In this way, 16th-century Spain erasmianized harmoniously and triumphantly: *there was an Erasmianism before Erasmus, an Erasmianism without Erasmus, and even an Erasmianism against Erasmus*',⁵ which of course unmasks this usage of the term Erasmianism as an absurd exercise. Bataillon's overestimation of Erasmianism also appears in his study on Portuguese humanism (1952).⁶ Although Bataillon later – in two small articles – came to the fore with an attitude that was a little bit more cautious (1969/72 and 1970),⁷ the damage was done. His theory was established, and it had a tremendous impact both at the time and on further research on the topic, as can be seen, for example, in the collective volume edited by Revuelta Sanudo and Morón Arroyo, *El Erasmismo en España* (1986).⁸

Different from Bataillon, the historian Andreas Flitner tried to pin down the reception of Erasmus (1952) by selecting a much smaller group

⁴ Seidel Menchi S., "Do we need the 'Ism'? Some Mediterranean Perspectives", in Mout – Smolinsky – Trapman (eds.), *Erasmianism: Idea and Reality* 47–64, here 49.

⁵ Ibidem, 48–49 (italics mine). For an Erasmianism before Erasmus cf. Huerga A., "Erasmismo y alumbradismo", in Revuelta Sanudo M. – Morón Arroyo C. (eds.), *El Erasmismo en España* (Santander: 1986) 339–356. For an Erasmianism against Erasmus cf. Bataillon, *Erasme et l'Espagne* (Geneva: 1991), 3 vols., vol. I, 229–231.

⁶ Bataillon M., *Études sur le Portugal au temps de l'Humanisme*, Acta Universitatis Conimbrigensis (Coimbra: 1952). On Erasmus's influence on Portuguese humanism, see the contribution by Catarina Barceló Fouto, in Barbara M. – Enenkel K.A.E. (eds), *Portuguese Humanism and the Republic of Letters*, Intersections 21 (Leiden – Boston 2012) 129–148.

⁷ Bataillon M., "Vers une définition de l'Erasmianisme", in *Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia, Tours 1969* (Paris: 1972), 2 vols., vol. I, 21–34; also in idem, *Erasme et l'Espagne* (Geneva: 1991), 3 vols., vol. III, 141–154 [1969/1972]; and idem, "À propos de l'influence d'Erasme" (1970), ibidem 305–312.

⁸ As quoted above.

of sources but using a much larger chronological and geographical frame.⁹ He also took into account the 17th century – finishing up with the appearance of the Leiden edition of Erasmus's *Opera omnia* by Jean Le Clerc (1703–1706) – and various (but not all) European countries as well.¹⁰ In this respect, Flitner's study is a 'Pionierleistung', of which he was well aware.¹¹ He limited himself to the "Nachwelt" (posterity) only, and to certain types of sources, especially biographies of Erasmus, works of reference, and polemical writings. Flitner's work has both the advantage and the disadvantage of a reductive approach: on the one hand, it is clearly arranged and always focused on what he considers to be his core business, but on the other hand, it depends too much on fixed ideas (if not prejudices), on historical mainstream thinking, and especially on some well-known 'judgments' Flitner considers to be 'authoritative' [!].¹²

Unfortunately, however, Flitner uses a very small-scale, if not narrow-minded, definition of reception: in fact, he is only interested in reception if it reflects the "headline trends" of the historical development of the 16th and 17th centuries. According to him, all other aspects of reception are arbitrary, "unzusammenhängend", "müßig", and therefore it does not make sense to take them into account: 'Allerdings wäre es müßig, die Vielfalt der Meinungen über Erasmus auszubreiten, wollte man *nur* die *seltsamen Verzerrungen* [sic] eines *historischen* Portraits durch die Jahrhunderte verfolgen'.¹³ Methodically, Flitner's study suffers from an inclination toward positivism and truisms. He does not show awareness of the various problems, orientations, goals, and options of reception research. He thinks that with his reductive approach he will produce a 'fester und greifbarer Stamm' (*sic*) with respect to the 'Betrachtung der Person und der Vita des Erasmus'. This seems illusory, especially when applied to a person who provoked as many different reactions as Erasmus did. Furthermore, the terms/notions Flitner works with are somewhat problematic, if not misleading: 'Urteil' (judgement) and 'Bild' (image). The second term is not even vaguely defined, and in fact may mean anything. A severe problem, however, is that 'Bild' suggests a close, albeit undefined, connection to the "historical" or "true" Erasmus, especially if the persons that

⁹ Flitner A., *Erasmus im Urteil seiner Nachwelt. Das literarische Erasmus-Bild von Beatus Rhenanus bis zu Jean Le Clerc* (Tübingen: 1952).

¹⁰ Most noteworthy, Flitner left out the Italian reception of Erasmus.

¹¹ Cf. his remark *Erasmus im Urteil seiner Nachwelt* 3: 'Das Thema scheint bisher noch fast unbearbeitet zu sein'.

¹² Cf. below.

¹³ Flitner, *Erasmus im Urteil seiner Nachwelt* 1 (italics mine).

produce this ‘Bild’ are authorities. A similar problem appears with the term ‘Urteil’: it suggests something “justified”, “correct”, and “authoritative”, if not “objective”; in other words, that the ‘judges’ speak the truth and will put to the fore “true” and authoritative verdicts on the subject of Erasmus.¹⁴ This is very unfortunate, since in its essence reception is anything but this. Flitner’s fixation on ‘authoritative judgments’ and historical prejudices may be illustrated by the way in which he deals with Luther. ‘Luther’s Urteil über Erasmus soll nicht in den Einzelzügen seiner Entstehung verfolgt, sondern nur so umrissen werden, *wie es in das Luthertum als autoritativ gültiges einging*’.¹⁵ This has little to do with reception studies, but more resembles the style of dogmatic manuals. In general, in his search for ‘authoritative judgments’, Flitner tends to neglect the remarkable independence and freedom which early modern readers made use of to apply texts to the most different purposes. In general, readers create and construct meaning; it does not matter whether that meaning reflects the “author’s intention” (whatever that may be) or not. This goes especially for the early modern period. It may well be that exactly the ‘seltsame Verzerrungen’ could be of special interest if one aims to analyze the processes of reception.

The most comprehensive works on the reception of Erasmus are the three impressive volumes by Bruce Mansfield (1979; 1992; 2003),¹⁶ which display profound scholarship and cover the time from shortly after Erasmus’s death up to the year 2000. For us, volume 1 is the most important, since it deals with the years 1550–1750. Although Mansfield clearly builds on Flitner’s study, he shows more awareness of the differentiations inherent in reception. It makes sense that – as he claims, in marked difference to Bataillon – he does not attempt to write a history of the ‘influence’ of Erasmusianism, but of the ‘interpretations of Erasmus’.¹⁷ Nevertheless, in other respects Mansfield seems a bit overambitious: for example, he tends to identify the ‘history of writing about Erasmus’ with ‘a history of important

¹⁴ The ancestry of ‘Urteil’ demonstrates the inadequacy of the term: it goes back to the well-known “iudicia”: paratexts that were usually added in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries to the editions of classical authors. The “iudicia” were meant to be authoritative statements underpinning the value of a certain text and to serve as guidance for the reader, showing him or her how to understand and evaluate a certain text.

¹⁵ Flitner, *Erasmus im Urteil seiner Nachwelt* 2 (italics mine).

¹⁶ Mansfield B., *Phoenix of His Age: Interpretations of Erasmus, c. 1550–1750* (Toronto etc.: 1979); idem, *Man on his Own: Interpretations of Erasmus c. 1750–1920* (ibidem: 1992), and idem, *Erasmus in the Twentieth Century: Interpretations c. 1920–2000* (ibidem: 2003).

¹⁷ Ibidem, vol. I, xiii.

strains in the making of modern civilisation'.¹⁸ In this sense, and surprisingly similarly to Bataillon, the reception of Erasmus changes into something universal and indefinite, and it loses much of its specificity. As in Flitner's study, historical headlines dominate Mansfield's 'interpretation', while other aspects tend to be excluded. In general, Mansfield's study is focused on historical and religious developments, such as the impact of confessionalism, and it shows much less of an interest in literary, philological, or other aspects. Thus, with respect to the early modern period, Mansfield discerns two major changes in the 'interpretations of Erasmus' that he identifies with 'changes in the moral and intellectual climate' – one ca. 1560 and the other in the late 17th and early 18th centuries:

The first of the larger changes in the moral and intellectual climate was the slide of the first two generations after Erasmus's death into murderous religious war. The lines [...] were drawn ever more sharply. Early catholic controversionalists like Cochlaeus still used Erasmus's witness against the Reformers; by the 1560s, Catholic polemic damned him, with them, beyond recall. Similarly, Protestant controversionalists abandoned the middle ground. The atmosphere of the last quarter of the 16th century was somber, brutal; Erasmus, as we know, was then the possession of a minority who saw themselves as outsiders. The second change – in the late 17th and early 18th centuries – makes Erasmus again a figure of the cultural majority. We have come into the vestibule of the Enlightenment. [...] Their purpose is to defend the Catholicism of Erasmus, but how different a Catholicism from, say, Bellarmine's. Religion, reason, sensibility must live together. In that atmosphere, Erasmus's reputation takes on a new lease of life.¹⁹

Mansfield's judgement along the "headline trends" of historical development certainly makes sense. Nevertheless, it does not explain everything. It seems that the reception of Erasmus was much more complex and diverse than that. For example, in the period of the 'somber' and 'brutal' climate of the religious wars, the philologist and philosopher Justus Lipsius in his autobiography (1600) used Erasmus's name in order to authorize himself as an intellectual: Lipsius, however, did not regard himself as an 'outsider'.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibidem. Cf. also vol. I, 4: 'The primary interest of this study is in Erasmus' reputation as a barometer of the changing atmosphere'.

¹⁹ Ibidem, vol. I, 300–301.

²⁰ For Lipsius' autobiography, see Enenkel K., *Die Erfindung des Menschen. Die Autobiographik des Frühneuzeitlichen Humanismus von Petrarca bis Lipsius* (Berlin-New York: 2008).

Important progress was made by Seidel Menchi's study of the reception of Erasmus in 16th-century Italy (1987).²¹ The intellectual historian Seidel Menchi not only explored an area of the reception of Erasmus that was until then largely unknown, but, even more importantly, she took into account book history. The advantage of her approach is that she left out most of the vague notions used thus far in the study of Erasmus's reception – "influence", "Erasmianism", "judgement", "Bild" – but turned to the 'material reality of the book', as she later stated in a reassessment: 'the book as a container of ideas, but also as a manufactured item, an object of use, the reference point of a concrete action: reading'.²² By a close analysis of the printing history of Erasmus's works in Italy, which comprises the impressive total of 186 book-scale editions and some 250 titles, she discerns three phases of Erasmus's reception in Italy from 1514 to 1580: a first phase from 1514 to 1528, a second from 1531 to 1555, and a third from 1556 until the end of the 16th century.

As Seidel Menchi plausibly demonstrated, although in the first phase Erasmus had a large number of readers in Italy (so many editions were printed that he represented a considerable economic interest), they were generally not at all interested in the 'main message' of his works. Instead, they focused on his writings about religious and political topics, and they used them as a source of information on the religious debates in Germany. 'For curious, restless learned Italians, the great scholar from Basle served as a special correspondent from the battlefield of the Reformation'.²³ According to Seidel Menchi, Italian readers were less interested in Erasmus as a philologist and textual critic, and hardly at all as a literary writer. Some readers bluntly identified Erasmus with Lutheran heresy. Erasmus's religious works were printed in enormous numbers, especially in Venice, generally in smaller formats than the authorized Basel editions, and particularly in pocket formats on low-quality paper – cheap editions for scholarly and ephemeral use. In this period in Italy, Erasmus's most important works were the *Enchiridion militis Christiani*, the *Ratio verae philosophiae*, the *Paraclesis*, the *Novum Testamentum*, and the *Paraphrases*, supplied by *De libero arbitrio*, the *Modus orandi*, the *Exomologesis*, the *De lingua*, and other writings. The reception of these religious works was not purely negative. Some readers were impressed with

²¹ Seidel Menchi S., *Erasmus in Italia: 1520–1580* (Torino: 1987; Germ. trans. *Erasmus als Ketzer: Reformation und Inquisition im Italien des 16. Jahrhunderts*, trans. U. Hartmann, Brill's Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 49 [Leiden –Boston: 1992]).

²² Seidel Menchi, "Do we need the 'Ism'?" 49.

²³ *Ibidem* 52.

those of Erasmus's religious ideas that seemed close to the Reformation, and they took him as an exemplary writer of the Reformation. For them, Erasmus replaced Luther, so to speak. This large reception of Erasmus as a heretical author, interrupted shortly by the effects of the Sacco di Roma, was prolonged on a larger scale in the second phase, when Erasmus's religious writings were translated into Italian, and thus reached an even larger audience comprising not only scholars, but all kinds of people who were able to read. Italian 'readers around 1550 deconstructed Erasmian texts, pulled out certain elements, and put them back together in an independent form that the Erasmus of the 1520s and 1530s probably would not have recognized as his'.²⁴ This phase, of course, ended when Erasmus was put on the *Index* in 1559. From then on, reactions were largely negative and polemical, and only a few editions were issued over the course of the rest of the 16th century.

A very useful and rich collective volume, edited by Nicolette Mout, Hans Smolinsky, and Hans Trapman in 1997,²⁵ went back to a conference held in Amsterdam in 1996 and, engaging in "Begriffsgeschichte", tried to clarify the frequently used notion of "Erasmianism". The central aim of the volume was to explore 'whether Erasmianism and Erasmian Humanism existed as a recognizable attitude during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries' and 'whether Erasmianism represented a definable middle way between the confessional conflicts in the early modern times'.²⁶ As was to be expected, the various contributors gave different answers. The overall impression is that the notion of "Erasmianism" has some legitimization, although it is not easy to define and has meant different things at different times to different people. One of the most critical voices came from the author of a surveying essay, Cornelis Augustijn.²⁷ By analyzing the different meanings of the notion, Augustijn comes to the conclusion that he can very well do without it – in other words, that the term fails as an analytical tool. Augustijn discerns three variant meanings of Erasmianism: (1) a 'wissenschaftliche Partei' (something like a 'school' or 'direction of scholarship'); (2) a 'Reformbewegung' ('movement of religious reform');

²⁴ Ibidem 54.

²⁵ *Erasmianism: Idea and Reality*.

²⁶ Cf. Nicolette Mout's "Introduction", ibidem 2.

²⁷ "Verba valent usu: was ist Erasmianismus?", ibidem 5–14; 5–6: 'Wenn ich mir das Programm des Colloquiums ansehe, komme ich zu dem Schluss, dass der Terminus Erasmianismus auf eine Menge von unterschiedlichen Phänomenen anwendbar ist. [...] Er gilt für religiöse, kirchliche, theologische und politische Vorstellungen, Ideale und Verhaltensweisen. Alles zusammen ist es eher ein Mischmasch als ein klar umgrenztes Gebiet'.

and (3) a 'Politischer Erasmianismus' (political attitude). These meanings are not necessarily connected with each other. In this sense, numerous, totally different intellectuals with extremely divergent opinions and convictions – may be labeled "Erasmians". Moreover, the term suggests that the attachment of these intellectuals with extremely different convictions with regard to Erasmus is rather close – close enough, anyway, that they may be regarded as his adherents or followers.

However, if one tries to figure out what the term "Erasmianism" contributes to our understanding of the underlying processes of reception, it is almost impossible to give an answer. The term certainly does not cover the whole of the reception of Erasmus, but only of those intellectuals who were very close to Erasmus and subscribed to his central ideas. Reception, however, is broader and richer, and above all, it mostly comes into being via different processes. In the volume itself, Seidel Menchi rightly states: 'the category "Erasmianism" does not adequately convey the richness of creative energies that Erasmus unleashed and the multiplicity of intellectual and moral experiences that found nourishment in his work. The application of this category, therefore would produce considerably hermeneutic inflexibility, for the largest group of Erasmus's disciples and interlocutors would have to be cut out of his legacy'.²⁸ One may add that this applies to not only Erasmus's disciples and interlocutors, but his recipients in general.

The present volume, of course, does not have the ambition to replace the above-mentioned comprehensive studies and monographs, or to provide a new, complete overall survey of the reception of Erasmus. Needless to say, both of these goals would be illusory ones for a moderately sized collective volume. Rather, via a number of case studies, it aims to increase our knowledge with respect to the underlying processes of the reception of Erasmus, and to shed light on aspects and texts that have not been taken into account or not understood in this way. In particular, literary aspects, and some philological ones as well, thus far have received little attention in studies on the reception of Erasmus. Several contributions in the present volume deal with those aspects. Literary reception is central to the contributions by Dirk Sacré (on the German Neo-Latin poet Eobanus Hessus), Philip Ford (on the French poet Pierre de Ronsard), Paul Smith (on the French monk Jean Thénault and the satirical writer

²⁸ Seidel Menchi, "Do we need the 'Ism'?" 57.

François Rabelais), and Reinier Leushuis (on the Venetian writer and protestant Antonio Brucioli). Leushuis analyzes the first Italian adaptation of Erasmus's *Laus Stultitiae*, Brucioli's dialogue *Della sapientia et della stultitia* (1526), a work that had not yet received much attention. In Seidel Menchi's studies, Brucioli figured only as a transmitter of Erasmus's religious ideas,²⁹ whereas she did not pay attention to literary aspects in the process of reception. In the present volume, Leushuis demonstrates that literary aspects, however, were of great importance. He argues that Brucioli was inspired by 'Erasmus's artful dynamics of dialogue, speech, and mimetic language'.³⁰ According to him, 'Brucioli was intrigued by "Folly's eloquence", i.e. her theatrical staging as a paradoxical mock orator who, in a serio-comic speech to her audience, adopts, intertwines, and transforms a multiplicity of voices, whereby the artful and ludic handling of *verba* (words and their meaning) takes precedence over *res* (the orator's argument)'.³¹

Since Erasmus's fame was not based on poetry, and poetry is not considered to have played an important part in his reception, it seems interesting to have a look at the way in which his work was included in early modern poetry, both Latin and vernacular (contributions by Sacré and Ford). Dirk Sacré researches a special case: the manner, style, literary means, and verse technique the Neo-Latin poet Eobanus Hessus (who was hailed as the German Ovid) applied in transferring a prose *declamatio* of Erasmus (on medicine) into Latin verses.³² Philip Ford analyzes the way in which the leading Pléiade poet Ronsard used Erasmus's prose

²⁹ Cf. above; see also Seidel Menchi S., "La circolazione clandestina di Erasmo in Italia: i casi di Antonio Brucioli e di Marsilio Andreasi", *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* 9 (1979) 573–601 and eadem, *Erasmo in Italia* 88–90.

³⁰ See his contribution in this volume oo.

³¹ Ibidem.

³² A similar but also different case is represented by the Portuguese humanist Diogo de Teive, who drew heavily on Erasmus's prose mirror of princes (*Institutio principis Christiani*) when composing his Latin didactic poem in iambic trimeter verse on the same topic – *Institutio Sebastiani Primi*, dedicated to the Portuguese prince Sebastião, the future king of Portugal (1552–1578). An article on this work has been published recently by Caterina Barceló Fouto, in Maria Berbara and Karl A.E. Enenkel (eds.), *Portuguese Humanism and the Republic of Letters, Intersections* 21 (2011), Brill, Leiden-Boston 2011, 129–148 ("Diogo de Teive's *Institutio Sebastiani primi* and the Reception of Erasmus' Works in Portugal"). As Barceló Fouto demonstrates, de Teive borrowed a considerable number of ideas, arguments, and sometimes even phrases from Erasmus's treatise. Nevertheless, the fact that Teive used *Erasmus* as a literary model does not mean that he was an Erasmian or a close follower of Erasmus: unlike his literary example, Teive was above all eager to follow in every detail the requirements of Catholic orthodoxy dictated by the Counter-Reformation, and he left no room at all for the favoured discursive mode of Erasmus in his *Institutio*

essay (adage) “Dulce bellum inexpertis” in two French poems, “Exhortation pour la Paix” (1558) and another one dedicated to – of all people – the warrior king Henry II (1559). As Ford demonstrates, there is massive intertextuality between Erasmus’s adage and the two poems, both on the level of ideas and on the verbal level. The Flemish humanist Franciscus Thorius is another case that testifies to the meandering ways of Erasmus’s reception: Thorius transferred Ronsard’s “Exhortation pour la Paix” into a Latin poem, published in the same year.³³ Thus, a heterogeneous audience consisting of Latin and vernacular readers could receive Erasmus’s ideas via a French poem and its Latin reworking, even without having read Erasmus’s adage.

Our volume is based neither on the methods of the above-mentioned monographs (Bataillon, Flitner, Mansfield, and Seidel Menchi) nor on the term “Erasmianism”. It deliberately does not confine itself to reception(s) by “Erasmians”. True, Beatus Rhenanus (contribution by Enenkel), Eobanus Hessus (Sacré), Theodor Bibliander (Lucia Feliciano), and possibly Antonio Brucioli (Leushuis) and Ronsard (Ford) as well, might be called “Erasmians”, albeit in different senses and for different reasons, but the Jesuit Petrus Canisius (contribution by Hilmar Pabel), the star philologist and Neo-Stoic philosopher Justus Lipsius (contribution by Jeanine De Landtsheer), the English Bishop Edward Stillingfleet, and the caustic polemicist and opponent of religious tolerance Roger L’Estrange³⁴ (contribution by Gregory Dodds) certainly cannot, and hardly can the Dutch soldier and patriot Jan van der Wyk be considered an “Erasmian” (article by Hans Trapman).³⁵ Rabelais – most spectacularly, and possibly not without a satirical touch – called Erasmus ‘his father and his mother’, but it is still not clear exactly how and along what lines his reception of Erasmus came into being. In his contribution, Paul Smith sheds light on this question regarding the earliest reception of Erasmus in the French vernacular. Smith presents a new thesis in which he recognizes another author as the first vernacular recipient of Erasmus: the Franciscan monk Jean Thenaud,

principis Christiani viz. his criticism of the Church, its institutions, its organization, and its rituals.

³³ *P<etri> Ronsardi ad Pacem exhortatio Latinis versibus de Gallicis expressa a Francisco Thorio Bellione* (Paris, Andreas Wechel: 1558).

³⁴ L’Estrange Roger, *Toleration Discuss’d, in Two Dialogues* (London, Henry Brome: 1679).

³⁵ Cf. the contribution by Hans Trapman in this volume, 269: ‘We may conclude that Van der Wyck’s fundamental ideas are diametrically opposed to those of Erasmus. Over and against Erasmus, the biblical humanist advocating a spiritual form of Christianity, stands Van der Wyck, the enlightened materialist and atheist’.

who was closely linked to the court of the French King. Smith argues that it was Thénault who linked Rabelais with Erasmus. Here, again, the meandering courses of Erasmus's reception come to the fore: in his *Triumphe de Prudence*, Thénault reworked the first printed French translation of Erasmus's *Laus Stultitiae*, the *De la Declamation des Louanges de la Folie*, generally ascribed to Georges Haloin and anonymously printed in 1520.³⁶ Rabelais was acquainted with Thénault's work. These intermediary sources are probably responsible for the great number of verbal quotes of and allusions to the *Laus Stultitiae* in Rabelais's work. Justus Lipsius, very different from Rabelais, refrained from including *verbatim* quotations from Erasmus in his writings. But, as Jeanine De Landtsheer tries to show, he nevertheless used Erasmus's writings in other respects – for example, the *Institutio principis Christiani* for certain passages in his famous manual *Politica*. It is still not totally clear why Lipsius largely avoided *verbatim* quotations of Erasmus. Was it due to (his) ambivalent attitude toward the Roterodamus; scholarly competition, envy, and a striving for originality; difference in political insights; a reluctance to ascribe to a recent author the status of *auctoritas*, or a reluctance to mention intermediary sources at all; or a fear of quoting an author who figured in the *Index librorum prohibitorum*?³⁷

In the present volume, unlike in the works by Flitner and Mansfield, reception is not limited to the headlines of historical and religious development – although those are certainly taken into account (cf. the section on religious ideas, with contributions by Lucia Felici, Gregory Dodds, and Hilmar Pabel) – to Erasmus's *genuine* thoughts and ideas, or to something like the “historical Erasmus” (whatever that term may mean). In our view, reception is a more complex phenomenon. Of the greatest importance is the *active role of the reader or recipient*, who may construct meanings that differ greatly from the so-called “author's intention”. In search of the active role of the reader, we apply, albeit not in a dogmatic way and not as an exclusive method,³⁸ reception theory: *Rezeptionsästhetik*,

³⁶ See Smith's contribution in this volume.

³⁷ In her contribution in this volume, Jeanine De Landtsheer tends to adhere to the last reason. However, the *Politica* were written and first published in Leiden (1589), in a Calvinist context where authors generally were not bothered by the *Index*. It is a telling detail also that in the first edition of the *Politica*, Lipsius did not mention Erasmus a single time. Thus, he probably had other reasons as well.

³⁸ It is self-evident that the contributors to this volume have applied a number of the traditional, commonly known methods of historical, literary, and philological research. With respect to the topic, there is no special need to discuss them in detail.

Wirkungsästhetik, or *Reader Response theory*. In the discussions surrounding the term “Erasmianism” (1997), Seidel Menchi thought that this method might be especially adequate for studying the reception of Erasmus,³⁹ although in her own approach she adhered to book history. In our experience, the method of Reader Response, or *Rezeptionsästhetik*, has turned out to be useful and fruitful with respect to other early modern key figures as well, such as Petrarch (2006). In *Petrarch and his Readers in the Renaissance*, which appeared in the same series, it could be demonstrated how *independently* early modern readers operated.⁴⁰ In the introduction to *Petrarch and his Readers*, we tried to elaborate upon the concept of the early modern “independent reader”.⁴¹

It is not necessary to repeat that argument in detail here, but it seems useful to point out the most important notions/terms, problems, and necessary adaptations. The *Rezeptionsästhetik* or *Wirkungsästhetik* was invented at the end of the 1960s by Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauß as a challenge to traditional, all too hierarchical, all too author-centred text interpretations.⁴² In its radical form, the theory states that the meaning of a given text is *only* construed by and during the process of reading. No meaning of a text exists outside of this process. Reading is described as an interplay between the ‘effect of a text’ (‘Textwirkung’) on the reader and the ‘active’ role of the reader (‘Leseraktivität’) who reacts to the text. In order to define and analyze this process, Iser developed various notions: ‘der implizite Leser’ (‘implied reader’),⁴³ ‘Leerstelle’, ‘Realisation’, ‘Unbestimmtheit’,⁴⁴ and so on. These notions, however, are a bit unclear

³⁹ Seidel Menchi, “Do we need the ‘Ism?’” 57: ‘In my view, the concept of “reader response” elaborated in literary theory during the last few decades [...] is better suited to interpreting the Erasmus phenomenon’.

⁴⁰ Enenkel K.A.E. – Papy J. (eds.), *Petrarch and his Readers in the Renaissance* (Leiden-Boston: 2006).

⁴¹ Ibidem, “Towards a New Approach of Petrarch’s Reception in the Renaissance – the ‘Independent Reader’”, ibidem 1–10.

⁴² Iser W., *Die Appellstruktur der Texte. Unbestimmtheit als Wirkungsbedingung literarischer Texte* (Konstanz: 1970); idem, *Der implizite Leser* (Munich: 1972); idem, *Der Akt des Lesens* (Munich: 1976); Jauß H.R., *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft* (Konstanz: 1967); idem, *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation* (Frankfurt a.M.: 1970); idem, *Kleine Apologie der ästhetischen Erfahrung* (Konstanz: 1972); idem, *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik* (Frankfurt a.M.: 1982); idem, *Die Theorie der Rezeption – Rückschau auf ihre unbekannte Vorgeschichte* (Konstanz: 1987); Link H., *Rezeptionsforschung* (Stuttgart: 1976); Müller J.E., *Literaturwissenschaftliche Rezeptionstheorien und empirische Rezeptionsforschung* (Frankfurt a.M. – Bern: 1981).

⁴³ See Iser, *Der implizite Leser*.

⁴⁴ See Iser, *Die Appellstruktur der Texte. Unbestimmtheit als Wirkungsbedingung literarischer Texte*.

and a bit hard to apply, especially in historical research. This is possibly one of the reasons why the *Rezeptionsästhetik* has brought forth less of a result on the level of detailed empirical research than one might have hoped. For instance, it is not easy to pin down in a concrete text what exactly a 'Leerstelle' would be or what one should ascribe to the 'implied reader'. The fact that Iser identified the 'implied reader' with the (vague) notion of the 'Wirkungsstruktur des Textes' did not help to clarify the problem.⁴⁵ Iser, in fact, moved in the direction of more traditional text interpretations by explaining the reception processes by certain *qualities of the text* ('Wirkungspotential'). This suggests that the way readers interpret a text is somehow due to the text itself. Another notion in that direction is that of the 'competent reader': a 'competent reader' will understand the text in a 'competent' way, and this means that he will let himself be guided by the text as organized by the apparently *eo ipso* competent author. Another problem is that some critics – particularly Iser but others as well – have limited the applicability of the *Rezeptionsästhetik* to *fictional* texts only.⁴⁶ According to Iser, only fictional texts have the special quality that enables readers of various historical epochs to put their own experience into the interpretation of the text. Only fictional texts provide the 'Leerstellen' and 'Unbestimmtheiten', and thus the indispensable pre-dispositions for diverging interpretations. Here, again, Iser focuses more on the qualities of texts than on the reader's activity.

All of this does not imply that the Reader Response theory would be inadequate, but rather that certain adaptations are necessary if one wants to apply it in a fruitful way. First of all, the focus on the reader and the process of reading is too precious to reduce it to certain qualities of the text or to limit it to a certain group of texts ('fiction'). This seems especially relevant for reception studies concerning the early modern period.

Early modern times are characterized by a more and more heterogeneous, diverse, fragmented, and changeable audience. Compared with the Middle Ages, new intellectuals entered onto the scene: various groups of new lay and religious intellectuals inspired by Humanism, lay spirituality, the Reformation, technical innovations, urban life, and so on. Even bakers, surgeons, carpenters, merchants, and soldiers counted. In view of this changing and ever-changeable audience it is difficult to speak of a 'competent reader'. What would a 'competent reader' even be? Early modern

⁴⁵ Iser, *Der implizite Leser* 60.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Iser, *Der Akt des Lesens*, *passim*.

readers were no modern historians, philologists, or “Literaturwissenschaftler”. According to their cultural disposition, interpretation was not limited to a kind of historical or philological research. When reading and interpreting a text they would not search for ‘Leerstellen’, ‘Unbestimmtheiten’, the ‘implied reader’, or similar things – or even for the “author’s intention” – but would first search for anything that was interesting or useful to them. Early modern readers felt legitimized to *use* texts in the way they *liked*. Therefore, for early modern reception research it is better to altogether avoid the (vaguely defined) notions of certain qualities of the text, such as ‘impliziter Leser’ (implied reader),⁴⁷ ‘Leerstelle’, ‘Wirkungspotential’, and ‘Textwirkung’, or exclusivist qualifications of the reader, such as the ‘competent reader’. They do not really help us to understand the processes of early modern reading and interpretation. Moreover, it does not make sense to limit our interest to ‘fictional’ texts or to ascribe exclusively to them the quality of poly-interpretability. As is generally known, in the early modern period there was no clear distinction between ‘fictional’ and ‘non-fictional’ literature.

This also goes for Erasmus, who – if one applies those modern categories – has written ‘fictional’ and ‘non-fictional’ texts as well. The *Laus Stultitiae*, the *Colloquies*, and some letters would probably be labelled ‘fictional’; the *Apophthegmata*, *Institutio principis Christiani*, the *Enchiridion militis Christiani*, and the *De libero arbitrio* would probably be considered ‘non-fictional’.⁴⁸ However, with respect to reception there is no essential difference. It is certainly not the case that the ‘non-fictional’ works were interpreted more closely to the author’s intention than the ‘fictional’ ones. For example, Italian readers, as Seidel Menchi has demonstrated, were inclined to interpret the *Enchiridion militis Christiani* and other religious works, but also the *Laus Stultitiae*, in terms of Lutheran heresy. Some readers identified Stultitia’s speech with the person of the author Erasmus, and some did not; the *Laus Stultitiae* was also interpreted variously as a Protestant attack on the Catholic Church, pious Catholic criticism, a pamphlet arguing in favour of atheism (cf. the contribution by Hans Trapman in this volume), a rhetorical exercise (Antonio Brucioli; see the

⁴⁷ Ansgar Nünning proposed in a paper published in 1993 to dismiss the notion of the ‘impliziter Leser’. See Nünning A., “Renaissance eines anthropomorphen Passepartouts oder Nachruf auf ein literarisches Phantom? Überlegungen und Alternativen zum Konzept des ‘implied author’”, in *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 67 (1993), 1–25.

⁴⁸ Some texts, such as the *Adagia*, would not fit in either of the two categories.

contribution by Leushuis), a playful and witty satire, a mock encomium, or an autobiographical statement. For some receptions more than one interpretation is relevant, as is the case with Rabelais (contribution by Smith). It is a telling detail that Erasmus himself gave mixed signals in this regard. In his preface to the work he emphasized that it was a playful rhetorical exercise, but in his *Opera omnia* he included it in the *ordo* of serious ethical writings. The same poly-interpretability goes for a number of Erasmus's 'non-fictional' religious writings in which he argued for religious tolerance. The English religious writer Roger L'Estrange,⁴⁹ who also edited Erasmus's *Colloquies*, and Bishop Edward Stillingfleet⁵⁰ used Erasmus as an authority for exactly the opposite, viz. *intoleration* (see the contribution by Dodds). It is clear that early modern readers connected both categories of texts, 'fictional' and 'non-fictional', with their personal experience, used them in various ways, and attached to them remarkably divergent meanings. As Erasmus's case in particular proves, *poly-interpretability was certainly not reserved to 'fictional' texts*.

Thus, in the present volume, in researching Erasmus's reception, *many completely un-Erasmian ideas and ideals come to the fore*: atheism (Trapman on Jan van der Wyk); radical enlightenment (the same); radical Lutheranism (as one of the aspects of Antonio Brucioli's reception); religious intolerance (Dodds on Roger L'Estrange and Edward Stillingfleet); anti-irenism (the same); radical universalism (Felici on Bibliander); political pragmatism; realism and utilitarianism that either annihilate the ideal of the 'Christian Prince' or, at best, regard it as insignificant background noise (De Landtsheer on Justus Lipsius); a princely ideal without a certain religious belief or confession (the same); a pragmatic sanctification of war (the same); Jesuit education, propagation, and catechization (Hilmar Pabel on Petrus Canisius); Marianism/Marian devotion (the same, although also anti-Marianism); reluctance to admit institutional Church criticism (Enenkel on Beatus Rhenanus); "pure" scholarship without literary writing, irony, and playfulness (the same); and, last but not least, even a personal, autobiographical preference for the profession of medicine (Sacré on Eobanus Hessus), which Erasmus, of course, did not share.

⁴⁹ L'Estrange Roger, *Toleration Discuss'd, in Two Dialogues* (London, Henry Brome: 1679).

⁵⁰ E.g. Stillingfleet Edward, *A Rational Account of the Grounds of Protestant Religion* (London, Henry Mortlock: 1665); idem, *Several Conferences Between a Romish Priest, a Fanatic Chaplain, and a Divine of the Church of England* (London, Henry Mortlock: 1679); *A Discourse Concerning the Idolatry Practised in the Church of Rome* (London, Henry Mortlock: 1671).

These various un-Erasmian ideals testify to the remarkable independence of early modern recipients in the process of reading. They picked out of Erasmus's works whatever was interesting and useful to them, and some of them instrumentalized the authority attached to the name of Erasmus for their own goals. They were not bothered by the question of what was truly Erasmian and what was not, nor were they eager to follow the "author's intention", the "historical Erasmus", or a kind of unmoveable, authoritative, and timeless meaning of his works. They regarded reception as a creative and flexible process – the more creativity, the more flexibility. Flexibility meant survival. Authority was neither denied nor excluded, but it was only a useful instrument in order to achieve certain goals. Roger L'Estrange and Edward Stillingfleet used Erasmus as an authority, but they had no intention of faithfully rendering (or repeating) his central ideas. Hessus appropriated Erasmus's brilliant but light-minded declamation when he was starting a new career as a medical doctor (1523/24). He included his poetic version of the declamation in a publication that was meant to be a self-advertisement for his medical services. Lipsius used the *Institutio principis Christiani* (as Diogo de Teive in his *Institutio Sebastiani primi* had done before) as a literary example because it was handy and partly because it saved him work. Lipsius never intended to render or repeat Erasmus's authentic political ideas. And so on.

All of this is not to say that the early modern readers had an outspoken tendency to "misunderstand" Erasmus. In reception studies I would be inclined to avoid this notion. Early modern readers surely picked up ideas that would today be considered genuinely Erasmian, if those ideas suited their interests and purposes. Several case studies in this volume also demonstrate these lines of reception. Early modern readers would appreciate and appropriate Erasmus's advanced philological humanism (Enenkel on Beatus Rhenanus), masterful and authentic Latin style (the same, Sacré on Eobanus Hessus, and Ford on Ronsard), rhetorical brilliance (Sacré on Eobanus Hessus, Leushuis on Brucioli, and Smith on Thenaud and Rabelais), playfulness (the same), tremendous scholarship and learning (Enenkel on Rhenanus, Sacré on Hessus, Ford on Ronsard, Pabel on Canisius, Smith on Thenaud and Rabelais, and Leushuis on Brucioli), religious tolerance (Felici on Bibliander), and irenism (Ford on Ronsard).

We hope that the case studies in the present volume shed some light on the processes and the different kinds, lines, usages, options, and shades of Erasmus's reception in early modern Europe. Needless to say, the reception of Erasmus was a truly European viz. international phenomenon. The ten essays deal with reception in the Holy Roman Empire/Germany

(Enenkel, Sacré, Pabel), Italy (Leushuis), France (Ford, Smith), England (Dodds), Switzerland (Felici, Enenkel), and the Southern and Northern Low Countries (De Landtsheer, Trapman). The present volume covers a number of aspects of Erasmus's reception, although certainly not all. Erasmus had as many responses as he had readers. Erasmus's reception is at least as complex, flexible, and manifold as his works. Much more research is required, especially case studies that provide in-depth analyses. We hope the contributions in this volume may stimulate further research in this fascinating field.

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Monaci Ecclesiae, XXI^o Februarii MMXIII,

in die fest. Scti. Petri Damiani

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PART I

HUMANISM

A BLUEPRINT FOR THE RECEPTION OF ERASMUS:
BEATUS RHENANUS'S SECOND *VITA ERASMI* (1540)

Karl Enenkel

Early Modern Biography, Literary Reception, and the Vita Erasmi

Beatus Rhenanus's *Vita Erasmi*¹ represents an interesting case in the reception of Erasmus. It was written by a man who was not only an important humanist but also a close friend of the Roterodamus, whom he at times even regarded as his 'best friend' or 'alter ego';² a person who had lived together with him during a certain period in Basel, been his closest collaborator, and served as editor of his works, notably of his letters. Thus, Rhenanus was a person who without a doubt had tremendous authentic and inside knowledge about Erasmus's life and works, and moreover, possessed the technical, rhetorical, and linguistic skills required in order to transfer his knowledge into a well-composed and well-written biography.³

¹ Critical edition by Allen in Erasmus, *Opus Epistolarum*, vol. I, 56–71 (quoted henceforth – with a few exceptions – after this edition, by page(s) and line(s)); Engl. transl. in Olin J.C., *Christian Humanism & The Reformation: Selected Writings; with The Life of Erasmus, by Beatus Rhenanus* (New York: 1965); German transl. in Hartmann A., "Beatus Rhenanus: Leben und Werke des Erasmus", in *Gedenkschrift zum 400. Todestage des Erasmus von Rotterdam* (Basel: 1936) 11–24. For the function of humanist biographies as transmitters of published texts, including Rhenanus's second *Life of Erasmus*, see my extendend and detailed study in German, "Vita als Instrument humanistischer Wissensvermittlung: Desiderius Erasmus, Beatus Rhenanus, Guillaume Budé, Louis Le Roy und Johannes Sturm" (ca. 80 pages), in Enenkel Karl – Zittel Claus (eds.), *Die Vita als Vermittlerin von Wissenschaft und Werk. Form- und Funktionsanalytische Untersuchungen zu frühneuzeitlichen Biographien von Gelehrten, Wissenschaftlern, Schriftstellern und Künstlern*. The present article is a much revised, altered, and shortened English version of the first portion of the above-mentioned study.

² Cf. Erasmus, *Opus Epistolarum*, nos. 362 and 1206.

³ On Beatus Rhenanus cf. Horawitz A., "Beatus Rhenanus: ein biographischer Versuch", in *Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-Hist. Klasse* 70 (1872) 189–244; idem, "Des Beatus Rhenanus literarische Tätigkeit", ibidem 71 (1872) 643–690 and ibidem. 72 (1872) 323–376; idem, "Die Bibliothek und Korrespondenz des Beatus Rhenanus von Schlettstadt", ibidem. 78 (1874) 313–340; idem – Hartfelder K. (eds.), *Der Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus* (Leipzig: 1886; reprint 1966); Walter J., *Hommage à Beatus Rhenanus à l'occasion du quatrième centenaire de sa mort* (Sélestat: 1948); Walter R., *Trois profils de Beatus Rhenanus: l'homme, le savant, le chrétien* (Strasbourg: 1997; 2nd ed. ibidem: 2002); Scarpatici B. von, "Beatus Rhenanus", in *Contemporaries of Erasmus* (Toronto-Buffalo-London: 2003; henceforth abbreviated CE), vol. I, 104–109; Hartfelder K., "Beatus Rhenanus" in

Small wonder that the *Vita Erasmi* has also received attention, albeit in different ways, in the large survey studies by Flitner and Mansfield on Erasmus's reception.⁴ Moreover, the *Vita Erasmi* seems to belong to a new development the genre of biography is supposed to have experienced in the early modern period, especially in the 15th and 16th centuries – a development that has drawn considerable attention in scholarly research in the last two decades.⁵ According to Weiss, in the first decades of the 16th century biography developed from the short *curriculum vitae* into a literary genre in its own right that brought forth substantial texts.⁶ Many scholars agree that the early modern “rise of biography” was caused by the “rise of the individual”: a vivid interest in the individual; in the individual's social, political, and religious representations; and in the search for, and formation and construction of, the individual's identity. This, of course, may be true. Nevertheless, the large number of studies in the past few decades paid hardly any attention to the fact that many early modern biographies of intellectuals – writers, poets, humanist scholars, scientists,

Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie 28 (1889) 383–386; Laureys M., “Beatus Rhenanus”, in *Der Neue Pauly*. Supplemente, vol. Bd. VI (Stuttgart-Weimar: 2012), cols. 51–54; Hirstein J. (ed.), *Beatus Rhenanus (1485–1547): Lecteur et éditeur des textes anciens. Actes du Colloque International tenu à Strasbourg et à Sélestat du 13 au 15 novembre 1998*, Turnhout 2000; D'Amico J.F., *Theory and Practice in Renaissance Textual Criticism. Beatus Rhenanus Between Conjecture and History* (Berkeley: 1988); Hirstein J., *Tacitus' Germania and Beatus Rhenanus, 1485–1547: A Study of the Editorial and Exegetical Contribution of a Sixteenth Century Scholar* (Frankfurt a.M. 1995; Studien zur klassischen Philologie, vol. 91); Beatus Rhenanus, *Rerum Germanicarum libri tres (1531)*. Ausgabe, Übersetzung, Studien, von F. Mundt, Berlin-New York 2008 (Frühe Neuzeit Bd. 127).

⁴ Mansfield B., *Phoenix of His Age: Interpretations of Erasmus, c. 1550–1750* (Toronto: 1979) 17–21, and Flitner A., *Erasmus im Urteil seiner Nachwelt; das literarische Erasmus-Bild von Beatus Rhenanus bis zu Jean Le Clerc* (Tübingen: 1952) 5–10.

⁵ Cf., among others, Backus I., *Life-Writing in Reformation Europe. “Lives” of Reformers by Friends, Disciples, and Foes* (Aldershot-Burlington: 2008); Bartuschat J., *Les Vies de Dante, Petrarque, et Boccace en Italie (XIV^e–XV^e siècles). Contribution à l'histoire du genre biographique* (Ravenna: 2007); MacDonald K., *Biography in Early Modern France 1540–1630. Forms and Functions* (London: 2007); Knowles Frazier A., *Possible Lives. Authors and Saints in Renaissance Italy*, New York 2005; Von Zimmermann Ch., “Biographik und Individualität: Überlegungen zum Problemhorizont biographischer Schreibformen”, in Schüle A. (ed.), *Biographie als religiöser Text/ Biography as a Religious and Cultural Text* (Münster: 2002) 21–40; Martin J., *Waltons “Lives”. Conformist Commemorations and the Rise of Biography* (Oxford: 2001); Enenkel K.A.E. – de Jong-Crane B. – Liebrechts P. (ed.), *Modelling the Individual: Biography and Portrait in the Renaissance. With a Critical Edition of Petrarch's “Letter to Posterity”* (Amsterdam: 1998); Mayer Th.F. – Woolf D.R. (eds.), *The Rhetorics of Life-Writing in Early Modern Europe* (Ann Arbor: 1995); Berschin W., *Biographie zwischen Renaissance und Barock* (Heidelberg: 1993).

⁶ Weiss J.M., *Humanist Biography in Renaissance Italy and Reformation Germany* (Aldershot-Burlington: 2010).

clerics, Protestant theologians, etc. – were not published as autonomous texts, but together with other texts, and thus in fact functioned as paratexts meant to accompany, explain, and transmit other texts.⁷ This fact does not seem to be of marginal importance, since it may have had an impact on crucial aspects of the formation of biographies: their selection and presentation of life details, rhetorical organization and tendencies, and composition. In general, early modern biographies are persuasive texts. They try to persuade the readers of certain (historical) facts, attitudes, and visions. If they accompany the works of early modern authors, they try to guide and influence the reception of those writings.

All of this is true for Rhenanus's *Vita Erasmi*: it is not an independent or autonomous literary text, but accompanies the Basel *Opera omnia* edition of Erasmus's works of 1540 as an introduction or a preface. On the title page, the *Vita* is literally called 'a preface by Beatus Rhenanus, describing the life of the author'.⁸ The *Vita Erasmi* goes back to a previous *Vita Erasmi* of 1536 that Rhenanus had composed as a paratext for another publication, Erasmus's edition of Origenes (Basel, Officina Frobeniana: 1536). The edition of the *Erasmi opera omnia* that was composed between 1538 and 1540 was a well-planned and extremely carefully executed enterprise that ultimately went back to directives of the author himself. Erasmus himself released an authorized catalogue of the writings he officially recognized as his authentic works.⁹ Beatus Rhenanus had already been involved in the publication of this catalogue. When the *Opera omnia* were published, he acted as a faithful executor of Erasmus's will.

With the *Vita Erasmi*, Rhenanus provided a blueprint for the reception of Erasmus's works. Interestingly enough, the work has never been considered in this way. It is a telling detail that its function as a preface was completely ignored even in the modern editions of the text. Rhenanus presented the *Life of Erasmus* as a letter of dedication to Emperor

⁷ On this topic, cf. the forthcoming volume Enenkel Karl – Zittel Claus (eds.), *Die Vita als Vermittlerin von Wissenschaft und Werk. Form- und Funktionsanalytische Untersuchungen zu frühneuzeitlichen Biographien von Gelehrten, Wissenschaftlern, Schriftstellern und Künstlern*. For the function of humanist biographies as transmitters of published texts see my "Vita als Instrument humanistischer Wissensvermittlung: Desiderius Erasmus, Beatus Rhenanus, Guillaume Budé, Louis Le Roy und Johannes Sturm".

⁸ 'Praefatio Beati Rhenani [...] vitam auctoris describens'.

⁹ *Catalogi duo operum ab Erasmo Roterodamo conscripti et digesti* [...]. *Accessit in fine Epitaphiorum et Tumulorum libellus* [...] (Basel, Hieronymus Froben und Nicolaus Episcopi: 1536).

Charles V. However, in his edition, Allen left out the parts that belong to the letter, viz. the first and the last pages, and the English and German translators followed him.¹⁰ In the German translation, Hartmann left out even more passages that are connected to the paratextual status of the *Life*. He probably considered them less relevant for what he decided its core business to be: to narrate Erasmus's life. The result of all of this is that in modern scholarship only a mutilated text of Rhenanus's *Vita Erasmi* was taken into consideration. The last time the complete text of the *Vita* appeared in print was in 1703, in the Leiden edition of Erasmus's works.¹¹

Modern scholars have been puzzled by Rhenanus's biography of Erasmus. In their eyes, the text was not at all what it should have been. Hartmann criticized 'the strange choices' the biographer made with regard to selecting facts and topics. He registered 'manche uns befremdende Ungleichheiten in der Auslese und Gewichtsverteilung des Stoffes', which he ascribed to the author's regrettable inability to come to a harmonious judgement of Erasmus's achievements.¹² In Hartmann's view, Rhenanus did not really understand Erasmus, certainly not the core of his thoughts and psychological motives. Rhenanus's inability, 'um die Einordnung des Verstorbenen in größere Zusammenhänge vorzunehmen', is (according to Hartmann) due to the fact that, chronologically, he was too close to Erasmus. Because of this, he failed to mention the very works that made Erasmus famous over the centuries, i.e. the *Laus Stultitiae* and the *Colloquia*.¹³ Furthermore, one of Flitner's criticisms was that Rhenanus did not draw on his personal memories of his friend Erasmus. This all resulted, in Flitner's eyes, in a rather poor and insufficient biography.¹⁴ Beat von Scarpatetti also seemed to have been disappointed by the text: he regretted that one finds nothing in it of the close personal relationship the two humanists must have had. According to his hypothesis, this may be due to an "Entfremdung" between the friends that might have taken place after Rhenanus had moved to Selestad. Von Scarpatetti also thinks that there may have been a problem of textual transmission: he wonders whether Rhenanus's text is authentic, and suggests that others may have changed it for the worse.

¹⁰ In Olin, *Christian Humanism*, and Hartmann, "Beatus Rhenanus".

¹¹ *Opera omnia emendatiora et auctiora* [...] (Leiden, Pieter van der Aa: 1703; henceforth abbreviated as *LB*), vol. I, fols. ***r and ***3r.

¹² "Beatus Rhenanus: Leben und Werke des Erasmus" 11.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ Mansfield, however, gave only a brief description of Rhenanus's *Life of Erasmus*, but refrained from an evaluation.

It seems worthwhile to take a different look at Rhenanus's biography of Erasmus – to analyze it by taking its paratextual status into account, and to single out its main elements and desired effects. Hopefully this will lead to a better understanding of the biography and its composition. My hypothesis is that the function of the text and its formation are closely connected.

Reader's Perspective 1: Humanist Posterity and the Holy Roman Empire

By 1540, Erasmus was not only a famous author but also a controversial one, whose works had as many admirers as they did critics and enemies on both sides of the confessional spectrum, among protestants and Catholics alike.¹⁵ To present his works to an audience that was this heterogeneous was not an easy job. It required much caution and a certain instinctive feeling regarding how to prevent negative or polemical reactions. Therefore, it was not helpful to present “Erasmus from inside” (so to speak) or the “private Erasmus”, viz. to give as many details as possible of his inner life, true feelings, thoughts, and motives. I think that this is the main reason why Rhenanus was very reluctant to disclose his knowledge of the “private Erasmus” – why he did not draw much on the personal experiences and memories that he must have had as Erasmus's close friend. Instead, he deliberately and cautiously dwelled on the surface: the picture he wanted to draw of Erasmus was a representative and official one. Much differently from what Flitner thought, the problem was not that Rhenanus lacked distance regarding his subject; on the contrary, Rhenanus did his very best to create as much distance as possible in order guide his readers in the required direction. The overall perspective from which he constructed Erasmus's biography was that of humanistic posterity and the notion of eternal fame. This was simultaneously harmless and efficient. A humanist striving for fame was a legitimate and generally accepted idea, and above all, remained outside all confessional radicalizations.

In Rhenanus's paratextual presentation, Erasmus was an all but polemical writer, let alone a religious one; he had worked and lived exclusively

¹⁵ Cf. i.a. Mansfield, *Phoenix of his Age*; Seidel Menchi S., *Erasmus in Italia, 1520–1580* (Turino: 1987); German transl. by U. Hartmann, *Erasmus als Ketzer: Reformation und Inquisition im Italien des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Leiden-Boston: 1992); Bataillon M., *Érasme en Espagne*, 3 vols. (Geneva: 1991); Mout M.E.H.N. – Smolinsky H. – Trapman J. (eds.), *Erasmianism: Idea and Reality* (Amsterdam etc.: 1997).

according to eternal values and rules, and had always directed his writings toward the eternal posterity of humanist fame. In presenting Erasmus thusly, Rhenanus propagates a thoroughly respectful, if not devoted and admiring, reading, and he tries to incorporate Erasmus's readers – whoever they are – into the humanist *Respublica litteraria* and its dominating system of values.

Eternal posterity, of course, tends to exclude ephemeral and daily matters: for example, the image of the Erasmus who had been immensely successful finding patrons and generating income and other personal advantages through his publications. In Rhenanus's presentation, Erasmus's scholarly activity was an entirely unselfish act, an *act of charity, love, and devotion to mankind*. Rhenanus reduces Erasmus's many patrons and relationships to one single, unselfish, and highly devoted commitment to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

This is expressed especially in the two opening pages of the text that were left out by its editors Allen, Olin, and Hartmann. Moreover, Rhenanus managed to skilfully combine Erasmus's attachment to the Holy Roman Empire with the perspective of posterity; Erasmus's name and reputation with the fame and reputation of the Holy Roman Empire; and the publication of Erasmus's works with the interests of Charles V.¹⁶

¹⁶ *LB*, Bd. I, fol. ***r: 'Quantae semper laudi fuerit apud veteres, invictissime CAROLE Auguste, cives habuisse viros insignes, ad posteros traditum inclytum illud septem Graeciae civitatum certamen satis indicat: quarum quaelibet natum apud se praeclarissimum vatem Homerum contendit. Nec iniuria. Quod enim majus ornamentum ulli, vel urbi, vel provinciae potest accidere, quam si talem progenuerit, per quem apud omnem posteritatem illustrem sit laudem consequutura? quae ex nulla re solidior obveniat atque ex litteris, quibus ad aeternitatem ipsam nihil magis durat. Hinc igitur moti Smyrnaei, Rhodienses, Colophonii, Salaminii, Ienses, Argivi, et Athenienses, certatim Homerum sibi vendicant, ut de Aegyptiis nihil dicam, qui illum suae gentis videri volebant. Quod si magni fecit Homeri natales ingeniosa Graecia, ceu omnis doctrinae parentis et fontis perennis, cur tua Majestas non merito gloriari queat, DESIDERIUM ERASMUM illum ROTERODAMUM in tua ditione certo natum et educatum, cuius industria velut postliminio revivere plenius litterae, non tantum in istis proximis Germanicarum Galliarumque regionibus, in quibus mira barbaries ante regnabat, verum etiam in ipsa nobilissima terrarum Italia, quum instructius, tum felicius huius ope florere coeperunt; ut, si fortassis ambitiosum sit, eum alterum Parentem litterarum vocare, tamen instaurator ac primarius illustrator dici et possit, et debeat. Quis enim a mille annis exstitit, qui plura scripserit, quum in sacris, tum profanis, tanta humanioris litteraturae peritia perpolitus? cuius libri in longinquas provincias frequentius exportati sint et avidius lecti? Denique quem omnium nationum eruditi magis coluerint observarintque? Nihil hic fingo, sed rem omnibus notam narro. Valebat namque stylo arguto, extemporalis, amoeno, terso, feliciterque fluente, quem assidua juvenis adhuc exercitatione sibi paraverat: nec minus iudicio valebat, quod habebat longe acerrimum. Hoc docti in eo praecipue sunt admirati, veneratique. Miraculo autem simile videatur, exactum adeo iudicium seculo tam rudi. Felicitati rarae perspicacissimi ingenii

Rhenanus blesses the Holy Roman Empire for having given birth to this world-famous scholar, and suggests that it would profit as much from him as the antique Greek town that gave birth to Homer.

In this way, posterity and eternity gain a political and legal dimension. Rhenanus uses the Roman Emperor as an authority in order to legitimize and approve the edition of Erasmus's *Opera omnia*. Charles V functions in the same way with respect to Erasmus's testament: he legalizes the humanist's will.¹⁷ About 1540 the Empire of Charles V was the political structure with the largest geographical extension, seemingly covering the whole world from East to West, from Prague to the columns of Hercules and beyond, as the Emperor's motto claimed ('plus ultra'). Thus, not only eternity but also the enormous geographical extension of Charles's universal Empire was instrumentalized to guarantee the acceptance of Erasmus's *Opera* by a maximum number of readers. Not only posterity but also the Holy Roman Empire was used in order to annihilate the limitations confessional borders could bring about with respect to the spread of Erasmus's *Opera omnia*. In a more implicit way, the Empire also stands for a kind of universal, Catholic religion. Deliberately and with much caution, Rhenanus leaves out any mention of confessional matters, not least Erasmus's many polemical religious works, such as his invective against Luther, *On Free Will*, or his invectives against the Leuven theologians or the Paris theologians (e.g. Noël Beda).

Positioning him beyond all ephemeral matters, Rhenanus hails Erasmus as a cultural hero of mankind, as a kind of Hercules of the new age. In Rhenanus's view, Erasmus had sacrificed himself and had renounced all worldly goods for the sake of mankind's cultural progress. Erasmus himself had used similar strategies of self-presentation. In various ways, he identified his humanism with the *labors of Hercules*, which can be seen, for example, on the portrait he sent to his patron William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury, or in a letter of dedication addressed to the same patron. Both portrait and letter accompanied Erasmus's edition of the letters of St. Jerome dedicated to Warham. In both portrait and letter Erasmus presents himself as Herculean hero of culture.¹⁸ The image of the

ferendum acceptum, magis quam ullis praeceptoribus, si mutos illos magistros excipias. [...]'.

¹⁷ Cf. *Vita*, I. 519.

¹⁸ Cf. Pabel H., *Herculean Labours. Erasmus and the Editing of St. Jerome's Letters in the Renaissance* (Leiden-Boston: 2008; Library of the Written Word, vol. V) 2–4; Jardine L., *Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton: 1993) 4–5; 47; 59; 63; 74.

Herculean hero of culture is another strategy Rhenanus applied in order to suggest a devotional and worshipful reading of the *Opera omnia*.

Reader's Perspective 2: Teleological Reading – Advanced Humanism

Another important means of reader's guidance in Rhenanus's biography of Erasmus is the concept of "progress", or *advanced humanism*. In Rhenanus's presentation, humanism had reached an almost perfect state at that time – roughly the preceding three decades (1510–1540) – and the person responsible for that was Erasmus.¹⁹ During Erasmus's boyhood there was hardly anybody in France or Germany who was able to write in authentic Latin and – maybe even more importantly – nobody who had sufficiently mastered Greek.²⁰ This situation changed radically due to two works by Erasmus: his *Adagia*²¹ (2nd edition) and the treatise *De duplici copia dicendi*.²² The second edition of the *Adagia* quoted by Rhenanus appeared in 1508 (in Venice), and the first edition of *De duplici copia dicendi* in 1512 (in Paris). In this way, Rhenanus dates the turning point in the development toward advanced humanism to the years 1508–1512. This development was strengthened and deepened by the foundation of two important institutes, the *Collegium Trilingue*²³ in Louvain (*Vita*, ll. 394 ff.), founded in 1518, and the *Collegium Regium*, *Collège Royal* or *Collège des Trois Langues* (later *Collège de France*; *ibidem*, ll. 404–409), founded in Paris in 1530. In his presentation, Rhenanus ascribes the foundation of both institutes exclusively to Erasmus; however, this is a bit one-sided, if not misleading. The *Collège Royal*, in fact, was founded by Guillaume Budé, who took the initiative, as one can see, for example, in the letter of dedication for his *Commentarii linguae Graecae* (1530) addressed to King Francis I.

¹⁹ *Vita*, l. 395: 'Itaque in confesso est literarum in his provinciis incrementa potissimum Erasmo deberi'.

²⁰ *Vita*, l. 383–386: 'In Germania Galliaque mire frigeabant literae; vix unus et alter Latine sciebat, Graece nullus. Et ecce statim, ut aeditae [sic] sunt *Adagiorum Chiliades* et libri *de utraque copia*, velut in nebulis coorto sole, emergere linguarum peritia coepit'.

²¹ ASD II, 1–6; Mann Phillips M., *The 'Adages' of Erasmus* (Cambridge: 1964); Eden K., *Friends Hold All Things in Common: Tradition, Intellectual Property and the 'Adages' of Erasmus* (New Haven: 2001).

²² ASD I, 6 (ed. B.I. Knott, 1988).

²³ Cf. Vocht H. de, *History of the foundation and the rise of the collegium trilingue Lovaniense, 1517–1555* (Louvain: 1951–1955); Nève F., *Mémoire historique et littéraire sur Le Collège des Trois-Langues à l'Université de Louvain* (Brussels: 1856).

A teleological view of scholarship such as Rhenanus's is an extremely efficient instrument of reader's guidance, since it forces the reader to identify with that view. No reader likes to be considered backward. Rhenanus defined his teleological concept of advanced humanism by four main areas or directions of research: (1) textual criticism, (2) idiomatic linguistics, (3) theology, and (4) Greek studies. Also important is what Rhenanus excluded from his definition: literary activity, the very field that traditionally had been regarded as humanism's core business, ever since the days of Petrarch (*1304).

Rhenanus's choice has a crucial impact on the reading he suggests for Erasmus's *opera*. He suppresses and excludes the literary works – partly those very works on which later Erasmus's fame was based: the *Laus Stultitiae*, the *Colloquia*, and the letters. He does his very best to prevent readers from regarding Erasmus as the skilful literary writer and virtuoso artist of the Latin language, the highly inventive and versatile master of witty narrative, and the ingenious rhetorician he actually was. He presents Erasmus exclusively as a serious, altruistic, and precise scholar – as a textual critic, linguist, theologian, and specialist in ancient Greek.

This distinctive and exclusivist blueprint – however strange it may seem to us in light of Erasmus's literary production and its later reception from the 16th to 19th centuries – goes back to Erasmus himself and his catalogue of works, which is basically still respected in the recent critical, ongoing Amsterdam edition (*ASD*). Erasmus divided his authorized *Opera omnia* into a number of *ordines*. Most noteworthy, he did not devote a certain *ordo* (or category) to the literary works; instead, he either suppressed them entirely (such as the treatise *De contemptu mundi*, the majority of the poems, or the satire *Julius exclusus*) or catalogued them in other *ordines*. In this way, the playful *Laus Stultitiae* figures exclusively as a serious work among the ethical treatises.²⁴

Erasmus's theology is defined by Rhenanus as a kind of “new theology”. It explicitly excludes the well-known traditional academic discipline shaped by Scholasticism as it was taught at Europe's leading universities, such as those in Paris, Cologne, and Louvain. Instead, it is a mixture of patristic studies, Greek studies, textual criticism, and, more implicitly, a bit of catholic reform theology. The most “progressive” element – at least

²⁴ *ASD* IV.3 (ed. C.H. Miller). In the list Erasmus gives in his letter to Johannes Botzheim, Erasmus prescribes the following reading of the *Laus Stultitiae*: ‘*Morias encomium, qui libellus sic nugatur, ut seria doceat, ne mireris admixtum huic ordini* [i.e. the serious ethical works]’ (*Opus Epistolarum*, vol. I, 40, ll. 9–10).

in Rhenanus's *Vita* – is probably its focus on patristic literature.²⁵ Rhenanus presents Erasmus's editions of the Fathers Hieronymus, Cyprian, Hilarius, and Augustine as the new foundation of modern theology.²⁶ It is noteworthy that the biographer himself took part in this new development, among other things with his edition of Tertullian (1521),²⁷ which was inspired by Erasmus, and in Froben's editorial project of the *Autores historiae ecclesiasticae* (1523). Rhenanus regards it as Erasmus's major achievement that modern theology does not focus on the late Scholastics, such as John of Hales or John Holcott, but on the Fathers, such as St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, Cyprian, and St. Augustine.²⁸

In Rhenanus's teleological presentation, textual criticism is probably the most important feature of modern scholarship, and it was Erasmus who played a pivotal role in its development. The biographer depicts the Roterodamus as the best textual critic ever. It is a telling detail that he adds in this respect a personal touch, viz. his enormous admiration for Erasmus's critical commentary annotations.²⁹ Rhenanus does not mention his own achievements in this field, although they were considerable: he edited more than sixty Latin texts and developed an advanced method that made more and better use of manuscript sources than contemporary Italian critics.³⁰

²⁵ For a general survey, see Backus I. (ed.), *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: from the Carolingians to the Maurists*, 2 vols. (Leiden-Boston: 1997); Frank G. – Leinkauf Th. – Wriedt M. (eds.), *Die Patristik in der frühen Neuzeit: Die Relektüre der Kirchenväter in den Wissenschaften des 15. – 18. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: 2006).

²⁶ *Vita*, ll. 448–450; Olin J., “Erasmus and the Church Fathers”, in idem, *Six Essays on Erasmus* (New York: 1979).

²⁷ Cf. Petitmengin P., “A propos du “Tertullien” de Beatus Rhenanus (1521) – Comment on imprimait à Bâle au début du seizième siècle”, *Annuaire de la société des Amis de la Bibliothèque Humanistique de Sélestat* (1980) 93–106; Munier Ch., “Les annotations de Beatus Rhenanus aux éditions de Tertullien (Bâle: 1521; 1528; 1539) et leur mise à l'Index librorum prohibitorum”, in Hirstein J. (ed.), *Beatus Rhenanus (1485–1547): Lecteur et éditeur des textes anciens. Actes du Colloque International tenu à Strasbourg et à Sélestat du 13 au 15 novembre 1998* (Turnhout: 2000) 235–262; Petitmengin P., “Tertullien entre la fin du XII^e et le début du XVI^e siècle”, in Cortesi M. (ed.), *Padri Greci e Latini a confronto: Atti del Convegno di studi della Società Internazionale per lo Studio del Medioevo Latino* (Florence: 2004) 63–88.

²⁸ *Vita*, ll. 448–450: ‘Sed, Deo gratia, videmus istarum admonitionum aliquem fructum. Theologorum manus pro Halesio, pro Holcoto, Cyprianum, Augustinum, Ambrosium et Hieronymum suis horis versant’.

²⁹ *Vita*, ll. 462–465: ‘Addidit plerisque locis censuras, quas ceu singularem dotem ac evidens argumentum praesentissimi perspicacissimi ingenii magis admiror quam quidvis aliud’.

³⁰ Cf. inter alia Hirstein (ed.), *Beatus Rhenanus (1485–1547): Lecteur et éditeur des textes anciens*; D'Amico, *Theory and Practice in Renaissance Textual Criticism*.

Rhenanus's construction, however, is only vaguely connected with historical fact. It is known that Erasmus had been taught at the Lebuius school at Deventer (1478–1484), although he did not receive much instruction from Hegius, who only arrived there in 1483, soon after which Erasmus left the school.³⁴ Erasmus himself, in marked contrast with his biographer, did not claim to have mastered Greek at such an early stage. In his letter to Johannes von Botzheim, he gave a very clear and realistic picture, according to which he started with his Greek lessons when he was around thirty years old, with Georgios Hermonymos.³⁵ Rhenanus, however, does not even mention Hermonymos. This seems even more remarkable because Rhenanus knew of Erasmus's letter to Botzheim, and because Rhenanus himself was taught by Hermonymos in Paris, some years after Erasmus.

Interestingly, Rhenanus connected Erasmus's development as a linguist and specialist in proverbial expressions very closely with the Greek proverbs that were inserted in the 2nd edition, which appeared in 1508. He probably regarded Greek literature as the most important, if not the ultimate, source of proverbs. Rhenanus does not mention Erasmus's first edition of the proverbs that appeared in 1500 in Paris. In all probability, he did not regard this work as a product of advanced humanism. He applied a similar perspective to the work *De duplici copia verborum et rerum*. He remains silent about the first version of the treatise Erasmus had composed in Paris in the 1490s. This version was only about the Latin language. In the printed version of 1512, however, Erasmus discusses the Greek language as well. Greek scholarship, as presented in Rhenanus's biography, is a decisive and indispensable mark of advanced humanism.³⁶

³⁴ Leijenhorst C.G. van, art. "Hegius, Alexander", in *CE*, vol. II, 173; Kronenberg H., "Wanneer is Alexander Hegius te Deventer gekomen?", *Verslagen en mededeelingen Vereeniging tot beoefening van Overijsselsch regt en geschiedenis* 29 (1913) 1–7; Kohls E.W., "Zur Frage der Schulträgerschaft der Brüder vom Gemeinsamen Leben und zum Rektoratsbeginn des Alexander Hegius in Deventer", *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Westfälische Kirchengeschichte* 61 (1968) 33–43.

³⁵ Erasmus, *Opus Epistolarum*, vol. I, 7, ll. 19–24.

³⁶ For more details, see my "Vita als Instrument humanistischer Wissensvermittlung: Desiderius Erasmus, Beatus Rhenanus, Guillaume Budé, Louis Le Roy und Johannes Sturm", in Enenkel Karl – Zittel Claus (eds.), *Die Vita als Vermittlerin von Wissenschaft und Werk. Form- und Funktionsanalytische Untersuchungen zu frühneuzeitlichen Biographien von Gelehrten, Wissenschaftlern, Schriftstellern und Künstlern* (forthcoming).

In Conclusion

In our view it makes sense to analyze Rhenanus's *Vita Erasmi* as a paratext to his *Opera omnia*. It was not meant as an independent biography or as a text in its own right, nor would it be justified to regard it as an example of the "new biography" called for by Weiss, for example. Its first and foremost aim is to function as a reader's guide to the *Opera*, and therefore as a blueprint for the reception of Erasmus's works. And Rhenanus offered a very distinct reader's guide by which he, among others, excluded and suppressed a couple of Erasmus's works. The reason for this strategy is certainly not, as Hartmann thought, that Rhenanus did not understand Erasmus and his psychological motives, or that he was unable, 'die Einordnung des Verstorbenen in größere Zusammenhänge vorzunehmen', or something similar, but that he was well aware of the controversial status of Erasmus's works. In order to streamline reception and to prevent new controversies or polemics, he cautiously provided a "Leseanleitung" that would satisfy readers from all kinds of religious, confessional, and intellectual backgrounds. He tried to prevent readers from regarding the Rotterdam humanist as a clever and virtuoso literary writer and tough theological polemicist. Instead, he offered them exclusively the picture of an altruistic and precise scholar, the exponent of advanced humanism who deliberately limited himself to textual criticism, Greek studies, patristic scholarship, and idiomatic linguistics.

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*MEDICINAE LAUS PER EOBANUM HESSUM EX ERASMO,
VERSU REDDITA REASSESSED*

Dirk Sacré

Sed ex omnibus familiarissime complectebatur
Martinum Hunium, ad quem Medicinae encomium,
in versus de Erasmica oratione translatum, conscripsit.¹

This paper examines one of the *opera minora* of Erasmus, versified by a poet in whose oeuvre it has never been regarded as a crown jewel, and thereby sheds light on the reception of Erasmus's works during his lifetime. I was struck at the outset by a small paradox of literary history: on one hand, the fact that the poet and humanist in question, Helius Eobanus Hessus, had been hailed as the greatest German Neo-Latin poet since the publication of his *Bucolica* in 1509 and his *Heroides* in 1514, and is still considered one of the best Neo-Latinists of his age;² on the other, the surprising verdict of an earnest and respected modern scholar, Nancy G. Siraisi, who in 2004 maintained that a poem in Hessus's hand, his *Medicinae laus per Eobanum Hessum ex Erasmo, versu reddita*, was a 'clumsily versified' work.³ Against the background of Hessus's excellent reputation as a poet, I took this negative judgement as an invitation to reassess the poem in question, which, though not the author's magnum opus, nevertheless went through a fair number of editions and thus enjoyed some popularity.

¹ Camerarius Joachim, *Narratio de Helio Eobano Hesso comprehendens mentionem de compluribus illius aetatis doctis & eruditis viris* (1553) [...], ed. G. Burkard – W. Kühlmann, *Bibliotheca Neolatina* 10 (Heidelberg: 2003) 86. See as well, for an English translation (with the Latin text), Vredevelde H. (ed.), *The Poetic Works of Helius Eobanus Hessus*, vol. I: *Student years at Erfurt, 1504–1509*, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* 215 (Tempe: 2004) (1–91) 52.

² Cf. e.g. Vredevelde H. (ed.), *The Poetic Works of Helius Eobanus Hessus*, vol. III: *King of Poets, 1514–1517*, *The Renaissance Society of America Text and Studies Series* 1 (Leiden – Boston: 2012) 3–11; Ludwig W., "Eobanus Hessus in Erfurt. Ein Beitrag zum Verhältnis von Humanismus und Protestantismus", in idem, *Miscella Neolatina. Ausgewählte Aufsätze 1989–2003*, vol. I, ed. A. Steiner-Weber, *Noctes Neolatinae* 2 (Hildesheim – Zurich – New York: 2004) (231 – ibidem 248) 232–233.

³ Siraisi N.G., "Oratory and Rhetoric in Renaissance Medicine", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 65 (2004) (191–211) 203.

The poem dates from 1523 or 1524 and was published in 1524.⁴ Erasmus's original work was apparently written in 1499, though it was printed only in 1518. Let us put both works in their contexts before reassessing the merits or possible shortcomings of Eobanus's verse paraphrasis.

In May 1499, Erasmus's first long sojourn in Paris was coming to an end; it was at the University of Paris that, among other things, he tried his hand at a declamation in praise of medicine.⁵ On the basis of a later letter of Erasmus, it has been asserted that he wrote it in the capacity of plume or *nègre* for Ghysbertus or Ghysbrecht Hessels, a physician who may also have attended the University of Paris in 1499 and perhaps delivered an exhortation to young men to take up the study of medicine. Ghysbrecht afterwards had a practice as physician to the town of Saint-Omer (1499), and was appointed surgeon to the future Charles V (1513); he seems to have died in 1521.⁶ There is, however, no evidence for this, and it is possible that it was merely a rhetorical fiction by Erasmus. The Rotterdam humanist kept his declamation in a drawer until 1518, when another

⁴ For the editions of the work, see Huber-Rebenich G. – Lütkemeyer S., "Hessus (Koch; Coci), Helius Eobanus", in Worstbrock F.J. (ed.), *Deutscher Humanismus 1480–1520. Verfasserlexikon*, vol. I: A–K (Berlin – New York: 2009) (1066–1122) 1091–1094. First edition Erfurt, 1524; also Strassburg, 1530. A revised version was published in Nürnberg, 1531; Wittenberg, 1543; 1544; Frankfurt a.M., 1560; Regensburg, 1561; Eisleben, 1561; Frankfurt a.M., 1564; ibidem, 1571, and 1582. The revised version is also to be found in Eobanus's *Farragines* (Schwäbisch Hall, 1539; Frankfurt a.M., 1549; ibidem, 1564). For two editions in France (Paris, 1533 and 1555), see Vanoutgaerden A., "Érasme 'nègre': *l'Encomium medicinae*. Histoire d'un texte et de ses éditions conservées à Bruxelles dans la Bibliothèque royale de Belgique et au musée de la Maison d'Érasme" in Hanselaer J. – Hendricks F. – Meeus H. (eds.), *E codicibus impressisque. Opstellen over het boek in de Lage Landen voor Elly Cockx-Indestege*, 2: *Drukken van de zestiende tot de twintigste eeuw*, *Miscellanea Neerlandica* 19 (Leuven: 2004) (379–405) 395.

⁵ For the genesis of Erasmus's *Declamatio in laudem artis medicae*, see Erasmus Desiderius, *Encomium medicinae*, in Domanski J., *Opera Omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami recognita et adnotatione critica instructa notisque illustrata*, vol. I, 4 (Amsterdam: 1973) (145–186) 147–160; Erasmus Desiderius, *Lof der geneeskunde*, ed. I. Bejczy (Amsterdam: 2001) 7–9; Erasmus Desiderius, *Lof en Blaam. Lof van het huwelijk. Lof van de geneeskunde. Lof der Zotheid. Brief aan Maarten van Dorp. Julius buiten de hemelpoort*, ed. van Dam H.-J., *Verzameld Werk van Desiderius Erasmus* 2 (Amsterdam: 2004) 244–249; Vanoutgaerden, "Érasme 'nègre'". As a declamation, this eulogy does not perfectly echo Erasmus's personal views on physicians and their practice, but largely represents his ideas on the ideal medical art: cf. e.g. Margolin J.-C., "Érasme et la Médecine", in Idem, *Érasme: une abeille laborieuse, un témoin engagé* (Caen: 1993) 28–301 (the article includes an analysis of Erasmus's declamation). For Erasmus's use of the declamatory genre, see Chomarat J., *Grammaire et rhétorique chez Érasme*, 2 vols. *Les Classiques de l'Humanisme* 10 (Paris: 1981) vol. II, 931–1001.

⁶ See on him Godin A., "Ghisbert", in Bietenholz P.G. – Deutscher T.B. (eds.), *Contemporaries of Erasmus. A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, 3 vols. (Toronto – Buffalo – London: 1985–1987) vol. II, 94.

Flemish physician⁷ promised to offer him two silver goblets; as a token of gratitude, Erasmus then pulled the declamation out of his reserve and had it published with a dedication to the munificent doctor. The *Encomium artis medicae* came out in Leuven in the spring of 1518, with subsequent editions following the princeps, including ones from Köln (1518), Basel (1518) and Mainz (1522). We do not know to what extent Erasmus revised his manuscript before its first edition, but the mere fact that there are quite a few references to Greek sources suggests at least a slight reworking, since Erasmus was as yet unacquainted with Greek at the end of the fifteenth century.⁸ In 1529, there appeared a new edition at Basel, this time revised and expanded with almost an entire new page. This revision, however, was subsequent to the original version of Hessus's verse rendering and was not taken into account by the German poet when he revised his own paraphrasis in 1530–1531.

Erasmus starts his encomium⁹ with the idea that the invention of medicine, like that of other arts, was attributed by the ancients to the gods, a sign of the high esteem the art once enjoyed. Medicine is an all-encompassing art, which requires, among other things, a thorough knowledge of human bodies in all their diversity, of the hundreds of diseases and their symptoms, and of a range of possible cures and herbs. Therefore, if the ancients sometimes came to think that doctors have the power to give life, that ancient belief is related to the fact that what a doctor does, namely cure people who are deadly sick, comes close to the act of bringing a person into being, the privilege of God; here again, popular belief shows how doctors were once valued. Nowadays, physicians save severely ill people on a daily basis; contrary to other arts, their profession is utterly indispensable. Let it not be forgotten that medicine also prescribes dietetic rules, enabling us to remain healthy, and relieves the ills of old age. Medical science, moreover, cares for the soul, the good state of which has its effects on the body. Doctors take charge of bodily

⁷ Hendrik van den Eynde or Afinius, on whom see Nauwelaerts M., in *Contemporaries of Erasmus* I, 12.

⁸ See, for instance, Erasmus, *Lof en Blaam* 246.

⁹ For the structure (and a survey) of it, see Chomarat, *Grammaire et rhétorique* 955–958. Chomarat based his structure to some extent on the marginal notes in the Latin editions of the work, which one can now find in the critical apparatus of Domanski's 1974 edition mentioned in note 5. Eobanus added his own marginal notes, which at times come close to those of Erasmus, without copying them literally, with the exception of the almost inevitable marginal entries *confutatio* (Erasmus, ad l. 363 = Eobanus, ad l. 343) and *epilogus* (Erasmus, ad l. 411 = Eobanus, ad l. 382).

health and thus shape the conditions enabling us to practice Christian virtues: the soul cannot function if the body is too much afflicted. In curing our bodies, physicians strengthen our brains, enabling us to restrain evil passions. As such, they are extremely important to the nations, who depend on the mental health of their rulers. No wonder that the Holy Scriptures desire us to be grateful to physicians, who protect life, God's most precious gift to mankind. And it is no coincidence that Christ and the apostles possessed the extraordinary faculty of healing the sick, and that they are said never to have been sick themselves. From antiquity and early Christianity on, medicine has been greatly honoured and practised by the most eminent men. We should take the same view: after all, a doctor is a true friend, for contrary to other comrades who flee when we are in trouble, this friend shows up when we are in need. The virtue of doctors consists in a tireless rescue of people's lives, although they could let them die with impunity; in addition their care enhances the quality of life of elderly people. Since medicine and dietetics are vital to the welfare of communities, states should be concerned with public health. It is normal that doctors, as opposed to other professionals, should acquire a certain wealth: that is the price our gratitude must award them. Admittedly there are inept physicians, but bad practitioners may be found in any profession or art. Having summarized his arguments, the encomiast urges students to devote themselves to the study of medicine and thus to labor for the benefit of their friends, countries and that of mankind.

Helius Eobanus Hessus's verse paraphrase of this short declamation must be put in context as well.¹⁰ When Eobanus made it in 1523–1524, he

¹⁰ For Eobanus's activities and ideas in these years, see Krause C., *Helius Eobanus Hessus. Sein Leben und seine Werke. Ein Beitrag zur Cultur- und Gelehrten-geschichte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. (Gotha: 1879 = Nieuwkoop: 1963) vol. I, 386–389; Grässer-Eberlich I., *Helius Eobanus Hessus. Der Poet des Erfurter Humanistenkreises* (Erfurt: 1993) 58–109; Huber-Rebenich G., "Der lateinische Psalter des Eobanus Hessus und das Ideal der *docta pietas*", in Ludwig W. (ed.), *Die Musen im Reformationszeitalter*, Schriften der Stiftung Luthergedenkstätten in Sachsen-Anhalt 1 (Leipzig: 2001) 289–303. For the Erasmian sympathies and religious attitudes of Eobanus's mentor Mutianus Rufus, see the penetrating portrait of the latter in Rädle F., "Mutianus Rufus (1470/1–1526) – ein Lebensentwurf gegen die Realität", *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 60 (2011) 3–33. For the *Bonae valetudinis conservandae rationes aliquot*, Eobanus's poem to which the Erasmian paraphrase was added, see Vredeveld H., "Helius Eobanus Hessus' *Bonae valetudinis conservandae rationes aliquot*: an Inquiry into its Sources", *Janus* 62 (1985) 83–112 (the editions are mentioned on 83–84); a brief presentation in Fasbender C., "Helius Eobanus Hessus, *Bonae valetudinis conservandae rationes aliquot*", in idem (ed.), *Conradus Mutianus Rufus und der Humanismus in Erfurt. Katalog zur Ausstellung der Forschungsbibliothek Gotha [...]* 2009, Veröffentlichungen der Forschungsbibliothek Gotha 45 (Gotha: 2009) 72–73.

had been a professor of rhetoric, poetry and historiography for some years at Erfurt university, where he was the leading personality of the humanist circles. He was also a great admirer and longtime supporter of Erasmus, whom he hailed as an outstanding writer, editor, scourge of barbarity, Christian humanist, the supreme integrator of philology and theology, and a reformer by no means inferior to Luther. In a long poem in his honour, Hessus called Erasmus

[...] Vir maximus huius
 Temporis ingenio, quo nec facundior alter
 Legiferas Christi coluit nec doctior aras,
 Nomine iam reliquis, iam se quoque maior Erasmus.
 Quo tantum felix Hollandia floret alumno
 Florebitque suo, quantum Cicerone superbit
 Arpinum vetus et magnae pars maxima Romae.
 (*A projectione ad Des. Erasmum Roterodamum hodoeporicon*, ll. 44–50).¹¹

The man with the most prominent talent our age has produced;
 No person was more eloquent or more erudite
 In cultivating the law-giving altars of Christ;
 Erasmus already outstrips all other men in reputation, even himself.
 Lucky is Holland which, thanks to its son, prospers and will continue to do so
 As much as ancient Arpinum and the greatest part of great Rome boasts its
 Cicero.

Erasmus's works were extremely popular among the Erfurt humanists, some of whom even taught on Erasmian treatises such as the *Enchiridion militis Christiani*.¹²

In the autumn of 1518, Hessus undertook a pilgrimage to Leuven, in order to meet Erasmus personally. In his *Narratio de Helio Eobano Hesso*, Hessus's former friend Joachim Camerarius has a remarkable page about the "Erasmomania" of the Erfurt humanists, who considered themselves happy when they could show a letter written to them by Erasmus, but the most blessed of men when they could claim to have seen their idol in the flesh. Quite obviously, personal acquaintance with Erasmus would enhance their own prestige, and such was indeed the case with Eobanus.¹³

¹¹ *Helii Eobani Hessi a projectione ad Des. Erasmum Roterodamum Hodoeporicon Carmine Heroico* (Erfurt, Mathes Maler: 1519), as found in *Camena* on internet, fols. A2v–A3r.

¹² Grässer-Eberlach, *Helius Eobanus Hessus* 84; Huber-Rebenich, "Der lateinische Psalter" 289. Eobanus had used Erasmus' *Colloquies* for his course on rhetoric at Erfurt University; in 1519 he had taught on the Rotterdam humanist's *Enchiridion*.

¹³ See e.g. Krause, *Helius Eobanus Hessus* vol. I, 283–311; Camerarius, *Narratio* 78; Grässer-Eberlach, *Helius Eobanus Hessus* 83–89.

He took with him a bunch of letters from his friends, all devotees of Erasmus, and hoped in turn that Erasmus's letters to him would burnish his status in Germany. Hessus spent a couple of days in Leuven starting on 16 October 1518, as the guest of Erasmus; but by this time his host was less interested than he once had been in contemporary Neo-Latin poetry, had many things to do, and was apparently unaware of the importance of the visitor, who got a rather brief and reserved reception. (Eobanus embellished the sober meeting in the poetic account he wrote of his trip,¹⁴ and Erasmus later apologized repeatedly for his rudeness). Still, Hessus was given a letter by Erasmus in which he was called a Christian Ovid and an *Ovidius renatus*.¹⁵ Though the *hodoeporicon*, Eobanus' poem on his voyage to Leuven, says nothing about it, I think it is quite possible that Hessus also received from Erasmus a copy of one of his recent works, the *Encomium medicae artis* in its first, Leuven, or its second, Basel edition of August 1518. After Hessus's return to Erfurt, the "Erasmomania" at the local university intensified even more, and in following years, other Thüringen humanists, too, would set out on a pilgrimage to Brabant. This was not a source of pleasure to Erasmus, for as Luther's influence became increasingly prevalent, Erasmus feared that these visitors from Erfurt would enable his opponents to make him look like a sympathizer of Luther himself. Eobanus had indeed, as Enenkel has stressed,¹⁶ received Luther's reformation enthusiastically at an early stage, though he was not the person to engage in profound theological or dogmatic debate. But when, as a result of the religious dissensions in Germany and of Luther's revolution, Erfurt university witnessed a serious crisis, resulting in a dramatic decrease in the number of students and a neglect of the humanistic disciplines, Eobanus was extremely unhappy with the outcome, and only a year after he had supported Luther in his *Ecclesiae afflictae epistola ad Lutherum*, he joined Erasmus's criticism of the Reformation as a threat to the *disciplinae humaniores*, and began to denounce the ignorance and the ill will of popular Lutheran preachers whom he held responsible for the decay

¹⁴ The *A projectione ad Des. Erasmus Roterodamum Hodoeporicon* [...] (Erfurt, Mathes Maler: 1519), ll. 383 ff.; cf. Wiegand H., *Hodoeporica. Studien zur neulateinischen Reisedichtung*, Saecula Spiritalia 12 (Baden-Baden: 1984) 58–63; 495–496.

¹⁵ See Erasmus's letters to Eobanus (19 October 1518: ep. 874, ll. 6–7) and to Ioannes Draco (17 October 1518: ep. 871, l. 9) as in *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami denuo recognitum et auctum* per P.S. Allen [...] vol. III: 1517–1519 (Oxonii: 1913) 411–412; 406–407.

¹⁶ Enenkel K.A.E., *Die Erfindung des Menschen. Die Autobiographik des frühneuzeitlichen Humanismus von Petrarca bis Lipsius* (Berlin – New York: 2008) 429–449; 464.

of serious humanistic studies.¹⁷ Thus Eobanus Hessus came to occupy a position mirroring that of Erasmus: just as the latter was considered a crypto-opponent of the Catholic camp on his own Catholic terrain, Eobanus came to be seen as an adversary of the Reformation movement in reformed Erfurt.¹⁸ Eobanus's former humanistic guide, Mutianus Rufus in Gotha, wrote to Erasmus in February 1524: 'Eobanus resipuit meo hortatu', meaning: 'at my urging, Eobanus has abandoned the Lutheran cause'.¹⁹ Perhaps – though I might be pushing things too far here – the mere choice of an Erasmian work as a subject of poetry amounted to taking a stance at this time: after all, the papal condemnation of Luther, the latter's reply, and his appearance at the diet of Worms, had heightened pressure on Erasmus, whose coolness if not hostility towards Luther became more and more open, to the point that in early 1524 he declared himself prepared to write against Luther.²⁰ Anyhow, Eobanus issued a condemnation of the preachers' stupidity in 1524, an Erasmian prose colloquy entitled *Melaenus* in which he praised medicine against the reformers, attributing to them the view that academics 'Medicinam corporum falsam et apparentem quaeritis, veram et magis appositam animarum negligitis' – 'You are in pursuit of a false and specious medicine of the body, while you neglect the true and more appropriate one of the soul'.²¹ Eobanus, on the contrary, emphasized how Scripture itself more than once stresses the importance of that art, which was desired by God himself, out of his desire that nature be at the service of his highest creature, mankind – a fact of which the preachers were of course completely ignorant. Thus the dialogue on medicine was a case study in which Eobanus made a plea to foster serious study and denounced the ignorance and unjust opposition of preachers to thoroughly-grounded learning. Moreover, the dialogue contains some echoes of Erasmus' *Encomium medicae artis*, the work Eobanus was

¹⁷ See e.g. the very clear words of Bonaemilius in the dialogue *Misologus* (*Eobani Hessi Dialogi Tres*, fol. C2r: 'Siquidem theologi linguaces [...] sic praedicant passim in urbibus et rure Christi doctrinam, ut fidem civilem et ingenuas disciplinas prorsus extinctas velint').

¹⁸ For the complex relations between the Erfurt humanists and Luther (with whose peculiar theological views some of its members, who almost saw in him an alter ego of Erasmus, were not apparently too familiar), see Krause, *Helius Eobanus Hessus* I, 312–330; 352–358; Scribner R.W., "The Erasmians and the Beginning of the Reformation in Erfurt", *Journal of Religious History* 9 (1976–1977) 3–31; Ludwig, "Eobanus Hessus in Erfurt".

¹⁹ *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi* V: 1522–1524, 409–410, l. 22.

²⁰ See e.g. Augustijn C., *Erasmus. His Life, Works, and Influence*. Translated by J.C. Grayson (Toronto – Buffalo – London: 1995 [= 1991]) 127–133.

²¹ Cf. *Eobani Hessi Dialogi Tres. Melaenus. Misologus. Fugitivi* (Erfurt, Mathes Maler: 1524), in the texts available on internet in *Camena*, fol. A4v.

versifying during the same months: from this *Encomium*, he drew the idea of the all-around knowledge a doctor needs, his necessary proficiency in astronomy, the theological aspects of medicine. Since this dialogue was undoubtedly a statement, both a defence of solid learning and an attack aimed at the reformed preachers, it is tempting if not compelling to view the versified *Encomium artis medicae* in the same light, especially given its general, philosophical and partly theological contents. There is, however, yet another perspective one may adopt on this piece of versification.

Eobanus Hessus's financial situation had never been sound (he had a large family and many needs – particularly a need for money to buy wine, his opponents would have said); now, it was growing even worse. In order to improve his economic prospects, the poet *pur sang* decided, in 1523, to try to obtain a degree in medicine at Erfurt. The faculty of medicine there had been in great decay, though, for many decades, and had not witnessed promotions for almost a century. He dreamed of travelling to Vienna or Prague to obtain his doctorate in medicine from the universities there, but never managed to raise the necessary funds for that, and in the end, the medical dream was given up. But precisely in that year of intensive study of the medical literature, Eobanus produced some works related to his new life project. The most popular of these was a didactic poem entitled *Bonae valetudinis conservandae rationes aliquot*, a kind of dietetic didactic poem, written in elegiac distichs, and published in Erfurt in 1524, a work that went through more than two dozen editions.²² Thus Hessus, though taking a new turning, remained what he primarily was, a Neo-Latin poet and a philologist – just as so many contemporary medical doctors were humanists involved in editing, translating and illustrating ancient medical texts. His aim was not to offer new medical insights; grounding himself on a large number of ancient, medieval and humanistic sources (which have been analyzed by Harry Vredeveld), his main goal was rather to endow well-known precepts with humanistic poetic elegance.

Now, to give more body to this didactic poem, to dignify the preceding practical and basic medical precepts, to stress his new medical interests and competences, and to underline his unswerving adherence to Erasmus's works and ideas, Hessus added to the 300 distichs of the *Bonae valetudinis conservandae rationes aliquot* his verse rendering of Erasmus's *Encomium medicae artis*, as well a series of epigrams on famous doctors. The unity of the three works was enhanced by the identity of the metre,

²² I used the edition of Regensburg, 1561, available on internet (Google Books).

Hessus's preferred elegiac couplets. The triad came out as a single volume in Erfurt in 1524. Here, then, we have another motive for Eobanus to issue this verse paraphrasis of Erasmus at this moment. I myself worked with the famous collected works, *Eobanus's Operum farragines duae*, issued at *Hala Suevica* (Schwäbisch Hall) in 1539, but in cases where that edition seemed to supply dubious readings, I also consulted the Regensburg 1561 edition, though it too appears to contain its own, at times bothersome, misprints.²³

Let me just add that this versification was dedicated by Eobanus to Martinus Hunus, according to Camerarius, Eobanus's most intimate friend. For the choice of this dedicatee (who also appears as one of the interlocutors of the dialogue *Melaenus*) there will have been a number of reasons. Hunus was not only a good friend of Eobanus, he had also made the same switch of profession Eobanus had in mind, from (in his case) philosophy to medicine; by July 1524, Erasmus was addressing him as *Martinus Hunus medicus*; he would travel to Padua to obtain his doctoral degree in medicine there, and would then establish himself as a physician at Graz. Furthermore, he was treasurer of the Faculty of Arts at Erfurt, and a bit later dean of that Faculty, at the time Eobanus was composing and publishing his medical poetry; no doubt, Eobanus was somehow hopeful of financial support from his esteemed colleague and friend that would enable him to complete his medical studies successfully. Finally, Hunus was an unconditional admirer of Erasmus, to whom he paid a visit, at Basel now, in the first months of 1524; Hunus would certainly be very happy with the dedication of an Erasmian work. And the choice of Hunus also fitted well with the ideological stance Eobanus appeared to take in at the period, for he too was an Erasmian who did not sympathize with Luther and the reformation at Erfurt.²⁴

²³ For instance, the 1539 edition has the metrical and grammatical impossible 'esse honor' at the end of line 18, whereas the 1561 edition correctly has 'esset honor'; the later edition is also better in line 285, where 'talīs amici' and not 'tales amici' has to constitute the end of the hexameter line; I was puzzled by the meaning of lines 293–294 in the 1539 edition ('Pauca tamen referam; nec enim fuit illa per omnes/ Cogendis subito fructibus uberior') until the 1561 edition made it clear that in line 293 'illa' should read 'ulla'; I presume the reading of line 342 in the 1561 edition ('Nam petit et medica gens eget omnis ope') is better than the one of the 1539 edition, which has 'petet' instead of 'petit'; on the contrary, the reading of line 70 in the former edition ('Artibus hic credi tot valuisse potest') is definitely preferable to that of the latter, which has 'credit' instead of 'credi'; the 1561 edition has an erroneous form 'captas' where the 1539 one had the correct 'captos', etc.

²⁴ On Hunus, see e.g. Kleineidam E., "Martin Hune", in Bietenholz – Deutscher, *Contemporaries of Erasmus II*, 214–215; Vredeveld, *The Poetic Works I*, 52, note 65. Hunus visited

It is time now to turn to *Erasmus ab Eobano versificatus* and to try to assess whether or not Nancy Siraisi was right in calling Eobanus's work a clumsily versified work. Unfortunately, Siraisi does not explain what she means by that judgement or how she came to it.

I think there are two ways of looking at the problem, for a 'clumsy versification' might refer either to artistically inferior or unclear verses, considered in themselves, independently from Erasmus's text, or to an inadequate or poetically unsatisfying rendering of the original text.

Let us concentrate first upon the second point, which is perhaps the most interesting one and the one Siraisi had in mind – as a historian, she will not, I think, have made a formal analysis of the prosodical and metrical features of Hesus's couplets, though her reading of the lines may have given her an impression about the smoothness of the lines or their lack of it.

Erasmus assumed the *persona* of a *medicinae doctor* in his declamation. Eobanus, though, abandoned the declamatory genre. His was an encomiastic poem, written at the instance (he pretends) of a friend of his who turned to the study of medicine:

Sic petis ut medicae scribam tibi nomina laudis,
Quis sit divinae, quantus et artis honor (ll. 5–6).²⁵

And so you ask me to describe to you medicine's entitlement to glory,
The nature and extent of the honor of this divine art.

Eobanus does, however, retain the Erasmian fiction of being a physician himself, thus suggesting his own expertise and adding authority to his arguments. Hence, he writes for instance:

Quid ferat ars animis nostra, videre libet. (l. 150)

I wish to see what help our art may bring to souls

or

Ars immortalis est proxima nostra Deo (l. 72).²⁶
This art of ours comes very close to immortal God.

Erasmus in March 1524 in Basel; a few days earlier, Mutianus wrote about him to Erasmus (*Opus epistolarum* V, 409–410, *ep.* 1425, ll. 15–20): '[...] tecum aget Martinus Hunus magister Erfordiensis [...]. Amat te vehementer. Adheret Eobano [...]'; see also *ep.* 1462 from 3 July 1524, 486–487, with the address 'Martino Huno medico'. For Hunus's negative attitude to Luther, see *ep.* 1425, ll. 17–19.

²⁵ In the quotations from Eobanus, I have modernized both the spelling and the punctuation.

²⁶ Similarly in ll. 91–92, Eobanus speaks about physicians with 'nos [...] damus'.

For the Erasmian public, a group of university students of medicine, Eobanus substitutes one person, an intimate friend but also an eager learner of the medical art. The nature of the audience has not fundamentally changed, and like the students in Erasmus, Hunus in Eobanus is both congratulated at the end of the work upon his choice to study medicine and spurred to continue his studies with much zeal:

Vobis igitur magnopere gratulor, eximii viri, quibus contigit in hoc pulcherrimo genere professionis excellere. Vos adhortor, optimi iuvenes, hanc toto pectore complectimini, in hanc nervis omnibus incumbite, quae vobis decus, gloriam, auctoritatem, opes est conciliatura [...] (Erasmus, ll. 423–427).

Accordingly, I heartily congratulate such talented men as yourselves, who excel in this, the most noble of professions. At the same time, I exhort you, the best of students: embrace medicine with all your heart, apply yourselves to it with every nerve and fibre of your being, since it will win you distinction, glory, prestige, and riches [...]. (*Oration*, 49–50).²⁷

Ex animo talem ergo animum tibi gratulor, Hune,

Tam bona qui potuit deligere ista sibi.

Perge modo et totis incumbere viribus aude,

Unde novus studiis iam tibi surgit honor [...] (ll. 401–404).

Therefore, Hunus, I heartily congratulate you on that inclination of your mind,

That was able to choose such good for itself

Just continue and dare to apply yourself with all your strength,

Whence new honor earned through study is already arising for you [...].

But Eobanus adds, in his final address to Hunus, that he will continue to be his guide in this field of studies, thus again stressing his own competence in medicine. This guidance, offered in verse to an individual learner who is also a friend, rather smudges the borderline between *protrepticus* and *panegyricus* on the one hand, and didactic poem on the other: the *Laus* has certain similarities to a didactic poem on the excellences of the art of medicine and thus fits well with the main poem in the book, the *Praecepta*; with the latter work, it shares the poet's privileged metre, the elegiac couplet, and therefore harmonizes with the *Chorus illustrium medicorum*, another work contained in the booklet. Together with the

²⁷ The English translation of Erasmus's work (indicated as: *Oration*) is always taken from Fantham E. – Rummel E. (eds.), *Collected Works of Erasmus* 29: *Literary and Educational Writings* 7: *De virtute / Oratio funebris/ Encomium medicinae / De puero / Tyrannicida / Ovid / Prudentius / Galen / Lingua*. (Toronto – Buffalo – London: 1989) 31–50; 430–437: *Oration in Praise of the Art of Medicine. Declamatio in laudem artis medicae*. Translated and annotated by Brian McGregor.

epigrams on famous doctors, the *encomium* may be seen as a kind of appendix to the main work, the *Praecepta*. As such, it had necessarily to be shorter than the latter, which runs to 330 couplets, whereas the *Medicinae laus* has 209:

Causa brevis debet carminis esse mei (l. 10).

The cause that I defend in this my poem must be brief.

This sentence obviously also hints, from a rhetorical viewpoint, at the virtually numberless arguments and ideas one could develop to endow medicine with prestige, and in that sense Eobanus's verse echoes the introduction of Erasmus ('medicae facultatis dignitatem auctoritatem usum necessitatem non dicam explicare, quod prorsus infiniti fuerit negotii, sed summatim modo perstringere', ll. 12–14 – 'not, I may say, to expatiate on the worth, influence, and application of the faculty of medicine, since this, of course, would be an endless task, but only to touch briefly upon these topics', p. 36). But it is also to be taken literally. Indeed, Eobanus did not versify every sentence of his model. This he himself avows at the end, where he states that he has indeed abridged the original, but also added a few new points – not new arguments or considerations, but, as the language of these lines, rich in flower imagery, suggest, new embellishments or illustrations to reinforce the value of Erasmus's arguments and make them more persuasive through the charms of poetical language:

Quae quantum nobis, tantum debebis Erasmo,
 qui prior omnibus haec sed sine lege dedit.
 Nos prius eximie culto succidimus horto
 Parte bona quae nunc pauca, sed apta vides.²⁸
 Addidimus quoque, ceu nostro de flore, corollas
 Quarum lecturos non pudeisse queat (ll. 411–416).

As much as to me, you will owe these things to Erasmus,
 Who gave them earlier to the public, but not in verse.
 In the first place I selectively plucked from that wonderfully cultivated
 garden
 The good things, few but fitting, now before you.
 And I added garlands from, as it were, my own florid stock
 Which the future reader will perhaps not regret to have read.

²⁸ For the expression, see also Eobanus's *Bonae valetudinis conservandae rationes aliquot*, ll. 549–550: 'Frumentis quoque non eadem natura nec idem / est sapor; ex illis pauca, sed apta canam'. It has Ovidian overtones: see e.g. *Amores* II, 2, 2 and *Fasti* II, 514.

Fundamentally, however, it seems to me that Eobanus renders very faithfully and committedly the content of Erasmus's plea. There is but one major point we miss in his paraphrase, namely the page on the necessity for governments to make public health their concern. As a matter of fact, most of that page was added only in 1529 by Erasmus: this explains why the paraphrase of it is absent from Eobanus's first editions. But the latter either did not notice the addition Erasmus later made, or did not want to insert a new, substantial fragment when he embroidered his own poem in 1530–1531. Erasmus's original version had only one sentence on the importance of medicine and doctors for public health care ('Quod si is optimus vir est qui maxime prodest rei publicae, ars haec optimo cuique viro discedenda est', ll. 323–324 – 'But if the best type of man is he who renders the greatest service to the state, then this art of medicine should be learned by all the best man', *Oration* 46). Eobanus did not render it into verse, perhaps because it was not clear enough to him that this was actually an additional consideration and not a conclusion of the preceding section on the benefits physicians offer to so many individuals. Conversely, Eobanus laid remarkable stress on a point Erasmus had hardly touched upon, or better, had implied without stating. In the chapter on the dignity of the art of medicine, Erasmus had noted the extent, the difficulty, and the complexity of the knowledge required by the physician; in that context he had briefly mentioned the fact that apart from a theoretical knowledge in so many fields, practical abilities were required as well (ll. 57–65). Eobanus turned this into a new argument in favor of the excellence of the art through a comparison, which is completely absent from Erasmus, between philosophy and medicine: the former offers only words, not to say futile discussions; the latter goes beyond theoretical knowledge and causes things themselves to change. The reduction of theoretical insight to word spinning on the one hand, and the abundance of terms denoting physical, practical and useful activities on the other, together with the sharp opposition between *res* and *verba*, bring out the painful contrast:²⁹

Multae scholae possunt rerum decreta sophorum³⁰
Dicere, sed sola garrulitate valent.

²⁹ And by its position at the end of this section, the argument marks a smooth transition to the next section, which is on the effects of medicine.

³⁰ 'Decreta sophorum' comes from a poem of Erasmus, as Harry Vredeveld made clear ('Traces of Erasmus' Poetry in the Work of Helius Eobanus Hessus', *Humanistica Lovanien-sia* 35 (1986) (48–59) 53).

Rebus agit medicus, verbis res applicat et quod
 Tantum verbo aliquis disputat, ipse facit.
 Ille manus audax naturae viribus infert
 Cogit et hanc cursus vertere saepe suos.
 Ille velut terrae fibris excludit apertis
 Quicquid et haec extra, quicquid et intus habet (ll. 61–68).

The schools are able to talk about thousands of dogmas of philosophers,
 But chattering is all they are good at.
 The physician is active in deeds, applies the things to words
 And executes himself what another person only treats of with words.
 The physician audaciously inserts his own hand into the workings of nature
 And often forces it to change its course.
 As though opening the entrails of the earth, the physician lays bare
 All the things it has on its surface, all the things it has within.

We find more, most of the time small, omissions or changes, when we compare Eobanus with Erasmus. Whenever Eobanus discards some sentences or examples, or adds new ones, he does so, it seems to me, for a number of possible reasons: in the first place for the sake of poetic concision and compression, or in order to conform to his poetic model Ovid, whom he parallels in leaving out topical features of oratorical delivery;³¹ in the second place to avoid needless repetitions (there are some in Erasmus); in the third place to steer clear of concepts and thoughts that might undermine the seriousness of his eulogy of the medical profession; in the fourth place to smooth away small inconsistencies in Erasmus's text;³² in the fifth place to express with due emphasis, opinions that were very important to the poet at the period; in the sixth place to avoid theological debates which might have caused troubles to the poet in Erfurt in 1524. Moreover, one occasionally gets the impression that the poet wanted to show off his erudition and to state more precisely, having reviewed the classical texts used by Erasmus, what the latter had stated more loosely. This last observation applies

³¹ To give an example: in the introduction to an oration, it is normal to announce in detail what one is going to talk about; thus Erasmus revealed that he would deal with the 'medicae facultatis dignitatem auctoritatem usum necessitatem' (ll. 12–13 – 'on the worth, influence, and application of the faculty of medicine', p. 36; cf. also the *peroratio*); Eobanus does not enumerate these topics and limits himself to the *laus* and the *honor* of medicine (ll. 5–6).

³² For instance, Erasmus says in the introduction to his speech that medicine is so respected for its multiple benefits, that a eulogist does not have to depreciate the other arts to make his point (ll. 20–21); in the following section, however, he starts with a comparison between medicine and the other arts (ll. 28–35).

to a few details in the text, which are not transformative; let us give one example and move on to more important features of the verse rendering.

In discussing the benefits physicians could obtain in ancient times and might also gain in the sixteenth century, Erasmus had adduced some Roman doctors from Antiquity, 'quibus Romae tum apud principem tum apud populum immodicum quaestum fuisse refert Plinius' (ll. 351–352; – 'who, Pliny tells us, enjoyed immensely profitable careers at Rome with both rulers and ruled', *Oration* 47); Eobanus looked up what Pliny had written (and consulted Gulielmus Budaeus as well) and wrote:

Portentosa quidem res est, sed vera relatu,
Roma quibus medicos quaestibus extulerit.
Quinquaginta super sestertia pone ducentis,
Annua quae medicis prodiga Roma dedit (ll. 301–304).

Plainly wondrous is the amount, but as true as I tell it,
Of the riches with which Rome fêted its physicians
Add fifty thousand to two hundred thousand sesterces:
That was the annual sum prodigal Rome gave to its doctors.

The inclusion of the precise sum was perhaps not an innocent display of erudition or a mark of Eobanus's devotion to Erasmus, but a telling (and longing) detail coming from a poor humanist, now doctor in spe, who hoped to improve his financial situation, a point to which I shall return; the precise amount he derived from Pliny, *Natural History*, XXIX,7.

More than one motive may be at work in any given passage, and may explain why Eobanus introduced changes to the original text, stressing some things, adding others, or omitting yet others, as some of the following examples will make clear. Needless to say, I cannot dwell on every verse deviating from the original text, and I limit myself to some examples that struck me as potentially relevant.

Discussing the eminence of medicine, Erasmus stressed its difficulty. Given the great diversity of human bodies and the infinity of medicinal herbs, the hundreds of different diseases and their variants and new forms, the number of venoms, the range of accidents that threaten man as much as disease, the indispensable knowledge of astronomy that is necessary for successful cures, and the danger posed by deceptive symptoms, it is a wonder that physicians are able to familiarize themselves with the many natural disciplines enabling them to heal the sick. When Eobanus versifies this idea, he takes over what Erasmus says (though with less repetition than Erasmus employs), but adds new elements: thinking of what he had written in his *Praecepta*, the poet refers to the knowledge of the different

temperaments that is indispensable for a physician but constitutes an extra challenge for a sound diagnosis and a successful cure. Furthermore, Erasmus had said that he did not need to compare medicine with other arts to make plain the former's excellence, but rather inconsistently now and then did juxtapose more than one of the arts. Eobanus, perceiving the contradiction, drops Erasmus's claim to keep silent about other arts and regularly emphasizes medicine's high value by contrasting it to them.

The section on the divine powers of doctors, due to which they have falsely been said to have brought people back to life, but which nevertheless testify to the capabilities ascribed to doctors, shows how the poet avoids the declamator's enumeration and congeries, and limits himself to an Ovidian number of examples, mostly one, two or three. Erasmus related in some detail how Aesculapius rescued Tyndareus from death, as other doctors allegedly did, according to Xanthus and Iuba; he further adduced examples from Pliny. Eobanus confines himself to two very short examples, one from antiquity (Leda's husband Tyndareus saved by Aesculapius, as mentioned by Erasmus, l. 71) and an unknown, possibly medieval, Prussian man (this is the only passage where I have been unable to pinpoint the allusion):³³

Tyndarida in lucem revocatum Epidaurius anguis,³⁴
lactet Prussiacus funera victa senex (ll. 79–80).

Let the Epidaurian snake boast of Tyndareus³⁵ restored to life
Or the old man from Prussia on having been victorious over death.

An Ovidian way of writing we also note in Eobanus's versification of the section on old age: where Erasmus stated that senescence is a burden which doctors can relieve through a *quinta essentia*, an elixir of life, Eobanus rejects that alchemical superstition (which was, by the way, rewritten and weakened by Erasmus in his final version). Indeed, for the author of the *Laus*, which verges on pure declamation, every argument was valid, whereas Eobanus omitted a line of thought that might undermine

³³ No trace of him in Eobanus's *Generalis Prussiae descriptio* (1514).

³⁴ The periphrasis 'Epidaurius anguis' for Aesculapius adds an Ovidian, or at least a paradoxical touch to the verse; *angues* or snakes would normally kill people, not recall them to life.

³⁵ The parallel with Erasmus (l. 71; accusative 'Tyndaridam'), who took the story from Pliny, *Naturalis historia*, XXIX, 3) makes clear that Tyndareus is meant; one would have expected the form *Tyndarea*, *Tyndaridam*, *Tyndariden*; *Tyndarida* looks like the accusative of the feminine noun *Tyndaris*, meaning Helen; that is probably why one finds in the 1561 edition 'revocatam'.

the authority of the art of medicine, and offers instead two harmless Ovidian examples from ancient mythology: Aeson who was restored to youth by Medea's decoction of herbs, and old Phaon, to whom Venus gave a box of ointment turning him into a handsome youth. Each of these is neatly articulated in one couplet, with the 'cure' filling the pentameter; thereafter, he labels the examples more or less as poetic embellishments and stresses the nugatory desire of these mythical heroes for juvenile good looks, while inserting an Ovidian line on the ephemeral nature of human beauty:

Grave mortalibus est onus senecta, quam non magis licet effugere quam mortem ipsam. Atque ea medicorum opera multis contingit tum serius tum etiam multo levior. Neque enim fabula est quinta quam vocant essentia senio depulso hominem velut abiecto exuvio reiuvenescere, cum extent aliquot huius rei testes. [...] Neque vero corporis tantum, quae vilior hominis pars est, cura gerit, imo totius hominis curam gerit [...] (Erasmus, ll. 112–119).

Old age is a heavy burden for mankind to bear, and one we can no more escape than death itself. Yet, thanks to the craft of the physician, the burden of old age can be considerably lightened for many people. For it is no mere myth that man can overcome old age and take on a new lease of life, as it were, by means of what they call the fifth essence, since there are several living witnesses to this fact. [...] Now the physician is concerned not only with the care of the body, the lower element in man, but with the treatment of the entire man [...] (*Oration* 39).

Res gravis est et, ut est, sic omnibus esse videtur

Infirmo reptans curva senecta gradu.³⁶

Haec ut sera magis, magis ut iucundior adsit

Si quaeris, medici provida cura dabit.

Desiit esse senex vetulusque repubuit Aeson:

Causa iuventutis Colchidos herba fuit.

Perpetuo iuvenem fama est vixisse Phaona

Unctum pyxidibus, diva Cythera, tuis.

Et, ne vana morer fugientis gaudia formae,

Solius et curam corporis esse velim [...] (ll. 137–146).

Old age, crawling with feeble steps, bent by age, is a burden and, Looks so, as it actually is, to all people. But if you seek that it should come later and

be more agreeable, then the doctor's prudent care will grant you that.

Aged Aeson ceased to be an elder, and, though advanced in years, grew young again;

³⁶ See for this pentameter Vredevel, "Traces of Erasmus' Poetry" 51.

The reason for his youth was a plant given by Medea.
 Tradition says that Phaon lived as a youth in perpetuity
 Thanks to an ointment from your boxes, goddess Venus.
 And, lest I dwell on the vain joys of transitory beauty
 And wish only the body to be taken care of [...].

Erasmus returned to the point a bit later on, and again cited some examples of ancient men who lived almost a hundred years or more – Pythagoras, Chrysippus, Plato, Cato the Elder, Antonius Castor (ll. 191–199). Eobanus declines to reiterate the same argument and ironically dismisses the treatment of these figures, contending that such a large number of magnificent examples is typical of orators, and cannot be dealt with by a modest poet with limited possibilities:

Rhetoras exemplis fuerat par grandibus uti;
 Nos sonus infanti noster in ore decet. (ll. 227–228).³⁷

It would have been proper for rhetors to use grandiose examples;
 My own sound is fitting in my less eloquent mouth.

At one point at least, Eobanus appears to correct Erasmus. The latter had stated that the benefits of medicine were so important and vital for mankind that the ancients had attributed the invention of the art to gods like Apollo and Aesculapius. Eobanus, who also served Apollo the god of poets, felt that the argument was overdone or at least incomplete, and added another allegedly divine gift which he then suggested to be inferior to that of medicine through the illustration of the most divine powers of the latter art:

Iam primum enim (ut ad rem festinemus) reliquae artes, quoniam nulla non magnam aliquam vitae commoditatem attulit, summo quidem in precio fuere; verum medicinae quondam tam admirabilis fuit humano generi inventio, tam dulcis experientia, ut eius autores aut plane pro diis habiti sint, velut Apollo et huius filius Aesculapius, imo (quod ait Plinius) singula quosdam inventa deorum numero addiderunt, aut certe divinis honoribus digni sint existimati, velut Asclepiades, quem Illyrici numinis instar receptum Herculi in honoribus aequarunt. Non equidem probo quod fecit antiquitas; affectum sane ac iudicium laudo, quippe quae recte et senserit et declararit, doctori fidoque medico nullum satis dignum praemium persolvi posse (Erasmus, ll. 28–37).

³⁷ *Infanti* (l. 228) I consider to be an ironical reference to Erasmus's topical *infantia* (l. 6) in the poem of his declamation. *Infans* *os* is not an expression of Eobanus's modesty as a poet, but has to be seen in contrast to the grandiloquence of the arts of declamation and rhetoric.

But let us press with our subject. The other arts have from the beginning been held in the highest esteem, since there is not one of them which has not brought some great boon to life. But the invention of medicine once upon a time was so wonderful to mankind, the knowledge so sweet, that its authors were clearly taken for gods, for example Apollo and his son Aesculapius; indeed, as Pliny says, 'There are some whom a single discovery has added to the number of the gods'. Or they were, at least, thought worthy of divine honours, as in the case of Asclepiades, whom the Illyrians treated as a god, affording him honours on a par with those of Hercules. While I do not personally approve of such actions by the ancients, I wholeheartedly applaud their sentiment and judgment, which were based on the sound principle that in the case of a learned and trusty physician no honour can be deemed too high (*Oration* 36–37).

Maxima dis siquidem causas mirata vetustas,
 Artibus humanis munera parva dedit,
 Non quia fictilibus dignum sit credere divis
 Aut non omne, quod est, muneris esse Dei,
 Sed quia sic pretium rebus fecisse volebant,
 Maior ut eximiis artibus esset honor.
 Sic leges, sic iustitiam, sic iura fidemque
 Munera divorum maximus orbis habet.
 Ut taceam reliquas humanis usibus artes
 Concessas, caelo sic medicina data est.
 Namque malis certa morbis ratione mederi
 Vix hominum credi posse videtur opus (ll. 13–24).

Indeed, Antiquity marvelling at the origins of things, attributed the greatest rewards to the gods
 And assigned small ones to the human arts, not because it would be laudable
 To believe in gods formed in clay, or because all that is is other than the
 gift of God,
 But because in that way they wanted to add to the value of things,
 So that higher esteem would attach to the exalted arts .
 And so this our great world sees laws, sees justice, sees equity and faithfulness
 as gifts of the gods.
 Not to mention the other arts donated to human kind for its benefit,
 Medicine was thus conferred by heaven.
 For it seems hardly possible to believe that through human accomplishment
 It would be possible to cure bad diseases with certain method.

Eobanus also drops some arguments or examples he considers to be minor, a bit risky or not serious enough: the omission of the elixir of life has already been touched upon. Furthermore, the poet does not expand on the role of medicine in exorcism (often there is a medical problem where a person is believed to be possessed by the devil) and refuses to versify Erasmus's frivolous or ludicrous example of an Italian from Spoleto who

was thought to be possessed and therefore to talk nonsense – actually, the man then spoke German! In the end, a doctor was able to detect the presence of worms in his body, and when these had been eliminated, the patient was restored to health – and lost the ability to speak German (Erasmus, ll. 231–244)!

When Erasmus comes to the brief argument that, as a general rule, doctors are always appreciated by humans and therefore can make a good living, whereas practitioners of other arts are often poor and disdained, Eobanus grasps the occasion to insert a digression with an implied reference to the lack of respect and remuneration he himself now experiences as a poet and professor of the arts: he adds an example to Erasmus's text, thereby writing in a truly Ovidian way and expressing his own indignation:³⁸

Adde quod caeterarum artium non ubique paratus est quaestus. Rhetor frigebit apud Sarmatas, iuris Caesarei peritus apud Britannos. Medicum, quoquo terrarum sese contulerit, suus comitatur honos, suum sequitur viaticum [...] (Erasmus, ll. 358–361).

There is the additional fact that the other arts cannot be profitably pursued everywhere. The rhetorician will be coldly received among the Sarmatians, the expert in Roman law among the British. Wherever in the world the physician goes, he finds that honour and a livelihood are afforded him [...] (*Oration 47*)

Quin etiam terris non omnes omnibus artes
In pretio lucris fertilis instar habent.
Sarmaticis rhetor fugiet derisus ab oris;
Cognitio est legum limite clausa brevi.
Ipse suae redeat patriae divinus Homerus,
Ipsum se superet carmine, pauper erit.
Heu aevum insipiens! Heu barbara saecula! Felix
Cui tales nasci contigit ante dies!
Non tamen ista queri fuit hic opus: omnibus artes
Cum pereant aliae gentibus, una manet:
Una ubicumque satis praestat medicina lucelli
Terrarum, quamvis ad Garamantas eas (ll. 327–338).

Moreover not in every country are all arts valued so as to be worthy of abundant profit.
A rhetor will be made fun of in the region of Sarmatia and beat a hasty retreat from there;

³⁸ For this well-known theme in Eobanus, see e.g. Möncke G., "Zwei Erfurter Drucke mit unbekannten Gedichten von Eobanus Hessus", *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (2004) 147–152.

Knowledge of laws is limited to small territories.
 Let the divine Homer himself return to his country,
 Let him surpass himself with his poetry, he will be poor.
 Alas, foolish age of ours! Alas, barbarian times of ours! Happy is he
 Who had the chance to be born before such an epoch!
 And yet in this case there was no need to make these complaints:
 When all other arts would perish among the nations, one remains:
 The world over medicine alone can offer enough profit,
 Even if you would go to the Garamantian lands.

Were Homer to return to his homeland, Greece or Asia Minor, says Eobanus, were he to surpass himself as a poet, his countrymen would now despise him and he would not earn a single penny. The reference is primarily to the fact that Greece is now in the hands of the Turks (Rhodes had been captured in 1523) and implies the ignorance of Greek on their part, but Eobanus also laments the neglect of the *bonae litterae* in the difficult situations of both Greece and contemporary Erfurt in these years. Our poet is no doubt comparing himself to Homer, as Ovid did repeatedly. The latter had written, inter alia, in the first elegy of his *Tristia* (I, 1, 47–48) that Homer would have written poor verse if he experienced the same reversal of fortune as Ovid, and in the second letter of the fourth book *Ex Ponto* (IV, 2, 21–22) that if Homer had lived in Tomi, he would have become a barbarian, too. In both cases Ovid almost equated himself to Homer; here then, it seems to me, Eobanus implies that he, too, is like Homer, in that his poetic talents are now despised in his own region, where they had been esteemed in years past. In the poetical paraphrase, then, Eobanus remains the poet he had always been; similarly, he remains the humanist who admires the ancient Roman heroes like Cato: whereas Erasmus in his declamation tended to discard his humanist role³⁹ and in the chapter in which he refutes some reproofs of the noble art of medicine wrote rather disapprovingly about Cato the Elder –

Catoni non placuit, non quod rem damnaret, sed quod ambitiosam Graecorum professionem non ferret homo mere Romanus. Isque tantum tribuit experientiae, ut artem esse noluerit, sed idem universam Graecorum philosophiam ex Urbe pellendam censuit. Existimabat homo durus ad purgandum hominis corpus sufficere brassicam et crebros vomitus; et tamen ille ipse medicorum hostis observatione medicinae in extremam usque senectutem robur infractum tutatus scribitur (Erasmus, ll. 371–377).

³⁹ But showed his interest in theology: see e.g. ll. 289–291.

Cato disapproved of it, not because he found the science itself reprehensible, but because, as a true son of Rome, he could not bear the blatant ambition of its Greek practitioners. Cato set such store by experience that he refused to acknowledge medicine as an art, but, there again, he recommended that Greek philosophy in its entirety should be banned from Rome. A man of uncompromising austerity, he was of the belief that cabbage and regular vomiting were sufficient to cleanse a man's system; yet the selfsame antagonist of physicians is recorded as having lived to a ripe old age with strength unimpaired through his attention to medicine (*Oration* 48).

Eobanus avoids attributing this contradictory attitude to medicine to the person of Cato, and in his much abridged paraphrase imputes the latter's rejection of the art only to the rudeness of the good old Romans:

Hanc Cato damnavit nimium Romanus, at ipsum
Conveniens duris moribus illud erat (ll. 347–348).

Cato condemned it, he who was too much of a Roman; but that condemnation
Was in accordance with the harsh customs of the age.

Talking about the superiority of medicine above all other arts, Erasmus had not only underlined (ll. 199–210) that Christ himself, after his incarnation, had not objected to crucifixion, but had refused illness; similarly, we do not read about any sickness of the Apostles; in that context, Erasmus had even inserted a digression on a passage in a letter of St. Paul in the New Testament, a passage which, said Erasmus, did not imply that Paul had suffered from migraine, but suggested that he considered healing an apostolic gift. Hence the Rotterdam humanist had deduced an argument in favor of medicine: doctors possess that gift as well, and medicine enables the human race to come close to the ideal state of being of Christ and the apostles. One can speculate why that argument was left out by Eobanus; it is possible that he saw it as too artificial a line of reasoning; but is equally possible that he considered the two points to be questionable or even dangerous from a theological viewpoint. For the same reason, Erasmus' first argument for the authority of doctors (ll. 211–244), whose advice is sought in some cases falling under civil or canon law, for instance when the pope wants to grant plenary indulgence to people at the moment of death or has to decide whether a bishop should be relieved of his office in the case of a horrible disease, must have been too risky in the new religious context in which the German poet lived and therefore have been excluded from the verse paraphrase. In the same frame of reference, it is not too difficult to guess that because of the precarious religious situation at Erfurt, Eobanus will have avoided intervening in caustic

debates regarding priests and monks: in the declamation, Erasmus had asserted (ll. 397–398) that ‘adulterers exist even among the priests, murderers and pirates among monks’ (*Oration* 49) without detracting from the fundamental value of religion itself, and that, therefore, bad doctors do not detract from the intrinsic goodness of medicine; Eobanus omitted this questionable parallel between doctors and clerics.

In another passage, however, one senses how Eobanus adapted Erasmus’s text to make him say what Eobanus wanted to say – be it in a careful way – to the preachers and reformers who dominated the intellectual climate at his university and the city at the period. In the section on the dignity of the art of medicine, Eobanus explicitly introduced an idea that was absent from Erasmus’s text: God taught us the immense powers of nature and therefore wanted us to use these for the advantage of mankind. This intimates a divine justification of medicine, and may be considered a pointed observation in the intellectual climate of Erfurt, hostile to the arts and sciences and solely interested in the salvation of the souls:

Omnibus auxilium medicus tulit, omnibus idem
Est opifex, ipso non renuente Deo;
Qui quia naturae docuit cognoscere vires,
Quod docet, hoc uti nos voluisse liquet (ll. 103–106).

A doctor helps everyone in each type of sickness, he is an expert craftsman to everyone

And not against the will of God: since God has taught us to understand the powers of nature,

It is clear that it was His will that we make use of what He teaches us.

The same frame of reference applies a bit further on, in a passage where Eobanus treats the theologians much more harshly than Erasmus ever did in his text. The context is that of the physicians dealing with both body and soul. Erasmus (ll. 119–157) had stressed that the body was the less important part of man, but that body and soul were united, so that diseases of the body could affect the soul and vice versa. The ‘theologian takes the soul as his starting-point, the physician begins with the body’ (*Oration* 39). The physician also cures the soul. ‘It is the task of the theologian to see that men are saved from sin, but without the physician there would be no men to be saved’ (*Oration* 40). The state of the body affects that of the soul. Eobanus, we note, is much more explicit about the theologians and seems to reprove them for focusing uniquely on the salvation of the soul, as if this were possible when the body is sick; moreover, he goes so far

as to accuse the theologians of engaging in silly discourse. This passage, which sounds almost like a straight attack on the theologians, stands at a far remove from Erasmus's discourse and should be considered against the background of what Eobanus was experiencing in Erfurt at the time:

Sunt etenim qui sacra colunt, qui mystica tractant,
 Qui iubeant animos excolere, inde nihil.
 Quorum ut parte aliqua tam frivola dicta refellam,⁴⁰
 Quid ferat ars animis nostra videre libet (ll. 147–150).

For there are men who attend to religion and rites, who deal with the
 mysteries of faith,
 Who may command us to perfect our souls, and nothing else.
 That I may to some degree refute such inane dicta of theirs
 Let me examine what profit our art may bring to the soul.

The adjective *frivulus* recurs a bit further on, when Eobanus summarizes in vigorous and sententious couplets a long passage from Erasmus, stressing the importance of medicine for mental health, and the superiority of doctors over theologians: the former take care of body and soul,⁴¹ the latter only of the soul, unaware of the close bonds between body and soul or of the body as the *condicio sine qua non* for the mental and moral welfare of a human being:

Theologus efficit ut homines a vitiis resipiscant; at medicus efficit ut sit qui possit resipiscere. Frustra ille sit medicus animae, si iam fugerit anima, cui paratur antidotus. Cum impium hominem subito corripuit paralysis, apoplexia aut alia quaedam praesentanea pestis, quae vitam prius adimat quam vacet de castiganda cogitare vita, hunc qui restituit, alioquin infelicitur in suis sceleribus sepeliendum, nonne quodammodo tum corpus tum animum ab inferis revocat? In eum certe reponit hominem, ut ei in manu iam sit, si velit, aeternam mortem fugere. Quid suadebit lethargico theologus, qui suadentem non audiat? Quid movebit phreneticum, nisi medicus prius atram bilem repurgarit? (Erasmus, ll. 132–141).

It is the task of the theologian to see that men are saved from sin, but without the physician there would be no men to be saved. The former would be an ineffectual physician of the soul if the soul that he was trying to cure had already departed. When a wicked man is suddenly stricken by a stroke or apoplexy or some other instant form of destruction which would kill him before he had time to renounce his evil ways, surely the effect of the physician in saving such a person, who would otherwise have to be buried

⁴⁰ In the 1539 edition *refellar*, in the 1561 edition *revellam*.

⁴¹ Eobanus puts this in an impressive couplet (ll. 169–170): 'Hos qui restituit num restituisse videtur / quantus homo est animo, corpore quantus homo est?.'

doomed by his own crimes, is tantamount to rescuing a body and soul from hell? At least he puts the man in a position where it now rests in his own hands whether he decides to escape eternal damnation. How can a theologian advise a sufferer from lethargy, when the latter cannot hear his advice? How can he move the melancholic, until the physician has purged him of his excess of black bile? (*Oration* 40).

A vitiis animus qui liberat, ille medetur
 Vix uni; medicans corpus utrumque facit.
 Frustra erit ille animae medicus, qui lucis egentem
 Nactus, ad oppressum frivola verba ferat.
 Saepius at medicus poterit revocare labantem,
 Ut sit curari quod queat inde, animus (ll. 171–176).

He who frees the soul from its sins hardly succeeds in healing one part of man;
 But he who cures the body does two things in one.
 The former will fruitlessly be a doctor of the soul if he is confronted
 With a person who is destitute of life⁴² and speaks inane words to a man
 who is entombed.
 But time and again a doctor will be able to revoke to life a collapsing soul
 And thus make sure that there remains in life that part which can be cured
 afterwards.

Another addition by Eobanus seems to refer to the local intellectual climate at the time. When Erasmus developed the idea that physicians can make a good living, he contrasted the profession to those of rhetoricians, lawyers and musicians, mostly poor people, with the exception of the very best ones (ll. 354–355). Here, Eobanus not only added the category of poets and Homer in particular (his mind turning to the difficulties of his own situation, as I noted above), but also that of the theologians: while stating that they are poor because nobody wants to pay for so-called good moral instruction, he also suggested that that class of persons, with its narrow-minded focus and its superior attitude to other intellectual occupations, was threatening to steal bread from the mouths of all the other specialized professions:

Adde quod e sacris raro gravis arca paratur;
 Vivere nam recte nemo libenter emit (ll. 321–322).

Moreover a heavy chest [of money] is seldom earned from theology
 Since nobody likes to pay for lessons teaching how to live rightly.

⁴² There is a deliberate ambiguity in *lucis egens*, which refers primarily to a dead person, but here also to a person deprived of the light of reason due to illness; 'oppressus' refers primarily to a person overcome by sickness, but probably also to a dead man.

Finally, two omissions of arguments in favor of medicine strike the eye; both have to do with medicine and worldly rulers. In the section on the utility of the art, Erasmus had emphasized (ll. 157–165) that nations and citizens owed their welfare to the mental health or equilibrium of their rulers, which is ensured by doctors; the example of Caligula demonstrates the need for a mentally stable ruler. Not a word about this appears in Eobanus's verses. Did he consider the argument too far-fetched, or did he not dare to hint at the possibility of a mental disease in the family of his prince? Even more surprising, at least at first sight, is the fact that Eobanus also left out a small argument developed by Erasmus in ll. 166–169: the superiority of medicine is exemplified by the largesse monarchs often showed to doctors, which exceeded their munificence to other meritorious people. One would have thought that this Erasmian argument could have served Eobanus as a useful plea vis-à-vis the authorities, and yet the German humanist elided it. My guess is that the poet did not want to overplay his hand or to rehearse an argument that was to occur later on in the section on the material benefits accruing to doctors, where he would indeed follow Erasmus and outdo him by adding concrete amounts of cash while reminding his readers of the financial rewards doctors had received in ancient Rome (ll. 301–306). The example of the physician Erasistratus, who was richly rewarded by Ptolemy, actually occurs twice in Erasmus's text (ll. 167–169 and 346–347), but Eobanus chose to adduce it only once, in the section on the benefits doctors receive (ll. 297–298).

Hitherto we have been dealing with the contents of the oration and of the poetical paraphrase; the comparison reveals Eobanus's fundamental faithfulness to the original text, as well as a few accents of his own. Did the poet also scrupulously respect the order of ideas set forth in Erasmus, did he stick closely to the arrangement of Erasmus's oration? A modern critic has noted that it would be possible to reorder some points without doing damage to the persuasiveness of the speech.⁴³ Eobanus, however, decided to follow in Erasmus's footsteps in matters of structure as well. In most cases the order of the arguments is identical with that of the original text. In the final chapter on criticisms refuted (Erasmus, ll. 370–404; Eobanus, ll. 343–378), for instance, and the epilogue (Erasmus, ll. 407–428; Eobanus, ll. 379–406), the poet follows Erasmus as closely as possible. In the chapters on the necessity of medicine (Erasmus, ll. 295–305;

⁴³ Chomarat, *Grammaire et rhétorique* 957.

Eobanus, ll. 275–278) and the one on its benefits (Erasmus, ll. 306–369; Eobanus, ll. 279–342), too, one observes the same respect for the original order (obviously with the omission of the chapter on public health, as discussed above). Even when Erasmus's text abounds in examples, Eobanus (not always, but at times) follows the list-like passages with fidelity to his source; a good example is the section on illustrious persons who praised medicine and held it in high esteem (Erasmus, ll. 245–278; Eobanus, ll. 229–262). Some omissions have already been discussed; most of the time these do not affect the general arrangement of arguments. There is only one exception to this rule, where Eobanus intervenes in the structure of the original speech. He alters the reasoning of the first argument in favour of medicine (Erasmus, ll. 16–27) – the fact that its use and necessity are obvious to everybody – and incorporates into the first argument material used by Erasmus in his second argument (the dignity of medicine), i.e. the fact that medicine was generally valued so highly that its invention was attributed to various divinities (Erasmus, ll. 28–65). By doing so, the poet avoids Erasmus's juxtaposition of ideas and develops a more cogent line of reasoning which runs as follows (ll. 11–36): great inventions for the benefit of man or advantages bestowed on mankind have been attributed to the gods, and though this is an error insofar as everything ultimately derives from God's generosity towards humankind, it shows us what a felicitous gift medicine has always been considered. And indeed, to restore to life a person at death's door is almost superhuman. Therefore, since medicine appears to be God's most useful and necessary gift to mankind, it is not necessary to praise it in order to realize its qualities: good wine needs no bush. Good health of mind and body procured by doctors, is indeed a most necessary gift: if it is absent, all other goods become useless; therefore, a doctor procuring good health is more important than a prince distributing his riches among his subjects. Eobanus, as I noted above, added his own justification for the poetical form at this point (ll. 37–40): since medicine is an almost supernatural art, no human voice could praise it adequately; but poetry will not fall as short as prose for this purpose. With this rationale, Eobanus not only succeeds in assembling in a logical order a number of considerations put forward in a loose order by Erasmus, but also manages to offer at the start of his poem an excellent survey of the concrete contents of his *Medicinae laus* which easily surpasses its Erasmian counterpart, with its abstract and vague reference to the 'worth, influence, and application of the faculty of medicine' (*Oration* 36).

As Chomarat noticed,⁴⁴ Erasmus did not devote excessive care to the transitions between the different arguments advanced in his speech. Eobanus for his part did not attempt continuously or conspicuously to smooth these shifts from one argument to another, which he sometimes marks by such formulas as 'Nunc age' (l. 41), 'igitur' (l. 229) or 'Quodsi' (l. 279).⁴⁵ On the other hand, Eobanus more than once inserted distichs which, just as in his poetic model Ovid, have the function of establishing smaller units centered around one idea through an antecedent statement or a concluding summary. Thus lines 295–296 constitute an appropriate introduction (missing in Erasmus) to the theme of the generous remuneration of doctors by ancient monarchs (ll. 297–306):

Praemia si memorem, quibus illam pendere reges
Sint soliti, nullam dicar habere fidem.

If I were to mention the recompenses kings used to bestow on this art,
I would be called untrustworthy.

Similarly, lines 311–312 are an antecedent summary of the theme of lines 313–326, where the wealth the practice of medicine brings is set against the poor compensation of other experts:

Utque ferunt aliae flores sine fructibus artes,
Sic haec largiflua praestat utrumque manu.⁴⁶

And whereas other arts produce flowers but bear no fruits,
This art offers both with a copious hand.

The paragraph on wicked doctors (lines 361–370) is clearly demarcated by a double distich, an introductory one (lines 361–362) and a concluding one (369–370):

Ecquid iniquius est hominum quam moribus artem
Arguere et laudem criminis esse loco? (ll. 361–362).⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Chomarat, *Grammaire et rhétorique* 957.

⁴⁵ Only in one case is an easier transition made by the poet. In line 263, the transition from the mainly pagan practitioners and admirers of medicine to Christ as a physician, is made easier by the insertion of lines 261–262 after the example of king Mithridates: there Eobanus mentions Arabs, Chaldaeans, Persians and 'many barbarian names' (not mentioned by Erasmus) who were involved in medicine; he then opposes the latter to the 'better' (l. 263) example of Christ as a doctor. Conversely, the fact that Eobanus has left out the sentence on the doctor's care for public health (Erasmus, ll. 323–324), makes the transition from the ingratitude of some people (Eobanus, ll. 285–288) to the idea that a doctor "inferior nulli est quaestibus atque lucro" (l. 290) rather abrupt.

⁴⁶ No such precise summary in Erasmus (but cf. his lines 345–346).

⁴⁷ The pentameter is formulated pointedly through an oxymoron; 'laus' stands for "ars ipsa laudabilis".

Is there anything more unfair than to accuse an art on account of the bad
behavior of individuals,
And that which is praiseworthy to be treated as wicked?

Omnibus haud noceat quosdam peccasse fateri.
Peccarunt homines; ars sine fraude fuit (ll. 369–370).

Let the confession of a few to malpractice do little injury to the whole
profession.
Individuals are guilty of misconduct; the art itself is without blemish.

Finally, the same technique is perceptible in the couplets 41–42 and 59–60,
which frame the section on the all-encompassing comprehension of
nature and natural phenomena a doctor needs to possess – though the
introductory distich is only part of a sentence, the sense of which is nar-
rowed down in the oblique questions that follow:

Nunc age, volve animo, circumfer in omnia mentem,
Naturae varias emeditare⁴⁸ vices [...] (ll. 41–42).
Go ahead, engage in reflection, direct your mind to everything
Reflect scrupulously upon the various vicissitudes of nature [...].
Maior ab ingenio medici labor omnia praestat,
Naturae occultum cui nihil esse potest (ll. 59–60).

The superior intellectual labor of the physician performs all things,
For nothing in nature can remain a secret to him.

When Eobanus issued his *Bonae valetudinis conservandae rationes aliquot*,
he did not aim at originality, as his introduction makes clear, but strove
for poetic elegance, and was also aware of the mnemotechnic advan-
tages of versified precepts.⁴⁹ Similarly, the end of the versified *Encomium*
stresses Eobanus's indebtedness to Erasmus, and highlights the novel
poetical dress added by the Erfurt humanist, a feature as important as
the contents of the poem:

Quae quantum nobis, tantum debebis Erasmo,
qui prior omnibus haec, sed sine lege dedit (ll. 411–412).
As much as to me, you will owe these things to Erasmus,
Who has given them before me to the public, but not in verse.

Furthermore, Eobanus underlines the value of the poetical form by chang-
ing the meaning of a rhetorical topos proposed by Erasmus: 'medicine is

⁴⁸ 'Emeditari' is extremely rare in ancient Latin (see Thll, s.v. "emeditor").

⁴⁹ *Bonae valetudinis conservandae rationes aliquot*, ll. 3–4; 7–10.

so noble and lofty an art, that I am afraid that my speech will not come up to the dignity of the subject', (ll. 5–6). Eobanus repeats that, but, with the lofty attitude of the Neo-Latin poet who believes in the power of poetry, suggests that his versification adds substantial splendour to his topic:

Atque ut divina res maiestate verenda est,
 Laudari humano non satis ore potest.
 Quod quia non potuit fieri sermone pedestri,
 Forsitan in versu gratia maior erit (ll. 37–40).

And as medicine is something venerable because of its grandeur,
 It cannot be adequately praised by human speech.
 Since this was impossible in prose,
 It will perhaps be more agreeable in verse.

The prince of poets did not bother to copy the rhetorical strategy of Erasmus who in his poem had introduced a traditional *modestia*, referring even to his *infantia* or 'feeble power of speech' (l. 6); Eobanus on the contrary hopes that his verses will to some extent do justice to the majesty of the subject; his 'forsitan' (l. 40) does not apply to his own possible poetical shortcomings, but modifies the correspondence between poetry and magnificent subjects. Similarly, the adjective 'subita' in one of the final distichs:

Haec tibi disparibus cecini dictata Camenis,
 Dum subita medicus ludit Apollo chely (ll. 409–410).

In elegiac couplets have I sung all this, dictated by the Muses,
 While Apollo the medical god suddenly played on his lyre

seems to refer at least as much to the sudden new direction Eobanus's poetry has taken as to the hasty nature of his verse paraphrase.⁵⁰

That *in versu gratia* of which the reader may have acquired some notion thanks to the excerpts quoted hitherto, can be investigated in a more formal analysis of prosodical and metrical features. Though I have not undertaken such a formal and quantitative analysis, my impression is that the prosodical and metrical technique of his hexameters and pentameters displays no important flaws. This poet was familiar enough with

⁵⁰ Which reminds us of the preface to the *Bonae valetudinis conservandae rationes aliquot*, ll. 15–16: 'Scripsimus ista rudes cui nunc assuescimus artis / et sunt praecipiti carmina facta mora'. Cf. furthermore *Eobani Hessi Dialogi Tres*, fol. Azv: '(Hunus:) Hui medicum! Mira prorsus metamorphosis tam repente ex poeta fieri medicum. (Hessus:) Quid ita? Tamquam nescias hoc studium praecipue cognatum poetis cuius Apollo, Musarum dux, auctor est et inventor'.

the formal characteristics of classical verse. In one of his dialogues, for instance, Eobanus noted that trisyllabic endings of the pentameter are rare in Ovid, but observed that they could round off an epigrammatic couplet.⁵¹ As a consequence, in our poem Eobanus has only five (ll. 84, 176, 206, 210, 360) such trisyllabic endings on 209 pentameters; three out of the five are actually quadrisyllabic, because the trisyllabic ending is preceded by a disyllabic word with which it makes a light elision (type 'atque animi') and the fourth one indeed occurs when a couplet coincides with a gnomic or epigrammatic sentence:⁵²

Saepe utriusque hominis vitam sic reddit utramque [ars medica],
Alterius terris, alterius superis (ll. 209–210).

Thus medicine often restores the life of both halves of man respectively
That of one half of him to the earth, that of his other half to heaven.

This does not mean that Eobanus always either achieves or approaches Ovid's elegance. Occasionally, his syntax is a bit unwieldy and stodgy, for instance in his attempt at rendering and amplifying a sentence of Erasmus through Ovidian paradoxes:

Atqui permultos nominatim recenset Plinius libro historiae mundanae septimo, qui iam elati partim in ipso rogo, partim post dies complusculos revixerint. Miraculum est, quod paucis dedit casus; et non magis mirandum, quod quotidie multis largitur ars nostra? Etiam si hanc Deo Optimo Maximo debemus, cui nihil non debemus, ne quis haec a me putet arrogantius dicta quam verius. Complurium morborum ea vis est, ut certa mors sint, nisi praesens adsit medicus [...] (Erasmus, ll. 84–89).

In fact Pliny, in book 7 of his *Naturalis historia*, cites numerous individual cases where men brought out for burial came to life again, some on the actual funeral pyre, others after a few days. What chance granted to a few is treated as a wonder; but how much more so are the examples which our art of medicine furnishes in abundance every day, even if, to forestall accusations of my being more concerned with personal vanity than with the truth, we owe this art, as we do everything else, to Almighty God. Such is the virulence of several diseases that they inevitably prove fatal unless a physician is at hand [...] (*Oration* 38).

⁵¹ *Eobani Hessi Dialogi tres*, fol. B1v: '(Momus:) Trisyllabon in fine pentametri poni non oportuit. (Hessus:) Atqui plerumque, Mome, id in se habet optabilem gratiam, maxime si epigramma claudat'.

⁵² The fifth example occurs in a less elegant couplet, which is also characterized by a triple repetition of 'sunt': 'Quod si sunt aliqui (sicut sunt multa malorum / milia) qui tantum nomine sunt medici' (ll. 359–360).

Quod casus paucis dedit, hoc ars provida multis:
 Mirari hanc poteras, ille sine arte fuit.
 Ut tamen hanc caelo debemus et omnia, sic nos
 Omnibus hoc, paucis quod dedit illa, damus.
 Nam neque divinum vulgavit in omnia munus
 Et voluit cunctis esse salutis opem⁵³ (ll. 89–94).

What was given by chance to a few, is given to many by this providential art;

This art you could admire, whereas chance was artless.
 However, just as we owe this art, like everything, to God,
 We doctors give to all people what God's art had given to a few.
 For God did not extend His divine gift to everyone,
 And yet desired it to be a source of salvation to all

Similarly, this distich on the monarch, who is believed to be a master over his citizens' lives and deaths, is rather prosaic and also remains unclear, probably because of its improper use of *haud aliter* and the vague *esse*, unless one turns to Erasmus's original:

Hos tamen haud aliter nostrae quam quatenus illam
 Esse sinant, vitae iura tenere vides (ll. 203–204).

You see, however, that they have power over our life only insofar as they permit it to subsist.

[...] certe vitam non aliter dare possunt nisi quatenus non eripiunt [...] (Erasmus, ll. 179–180).

[...] they are able to grant life only in a limited sense of not taking it away [...] (*Oration* 41).

A last example presents what seems to be a double comparative, for which is hard to find parallels in classical poetry:

Haec [senecta] ut sera magis, magis ut iucundior adsit
 Si quaeris, medici provida cura dabit (ll. 139–140).⁵⁴

But if you seek that old age comes later,
 And is more agreeable, then the doctor's providential care will grant you that.

⁵³ 'Omnia' in line 93 means 'omnes', it seems; the subject of the sentence seems to be 'caelum', i.e. "Deus".

⁵⁴ Cf. perhaps *Culex* 79: 'Quis magis optato queat esse beatior aevo'; see Leumann-Hofmann-Szantyr, *Lat. Syntax und Stilistik*, vol. II, 166–167. For the Erasmian original, see above, p. 57.

Examples of such a tangled and gauche style are, however, exceptional.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, there are instances where one senses that the poet is resorting to stopgaps of a kind. I would regard the numerous instances of modal verbs such as *esse, posse* in this light, but I find these also in the *Bonae valetudinis conservandae rationes aliquot*, classified as elegant by Harry Vredeveld.⁵⁶ Just a few examples:

Obsequor idque volens animo tam iusta petenti
Quaeque bonus nemo non tribuisse volet (ll. 7–8).⁵⁷

I comply, and wholeheartedly, to a person whose request is so justified,
A request no good man will not want to accede to.

Iam miserum est medici praescriptis vivere, ut aiunt:
O vocem Furias quae decuisse queat! (ll. 351–352).⁵⁸

Now, to live according to medical advice is miserable, they say:
A saying that might have been fit for the Furies!

Furthermore, the repetition of words, though a feature of Ovid's style as well, seems at times not to be the result of a deliberate choice on the part of the poet. Take the following excerpt, part of which has been quoted before:

⁵⁵ Still unclear to me is the syntax of line 225 in its context (ll. 223–226): 'Corpus ut hoc mortale sit immortale quis optet? / Ars tamen hoc quadam praestitit ista tenus. / Namque alacrem seros vitam servasse sub annos / Quaedam etiam vitae forma perennis erat'. Is there an error in the edition? Should we perhaps change 'forma' (which, however, is also present in the 1561 edition) into 'fama', so as to understand 'Nam fama est (complures homines) vitam alacrem servasse sub seros annos; fama erat etiam quaedam vitae perennis (in nonnullis hominibus)?' Anyhow, this passage ought to correspond with Erasmus, ll. 191–199, in which there is no reference either to 'fama' or to 'forma'.

⁵⁶ See e.g. ll. 237–238: 'Nusquam commodius quam vivere rure beato: / illa potest ipsos vita decere deos'; two lines further: 'Contigit, hoc optem vivere posse modo'.

⁵⁷ The use of the perfect instead of the present infinitive is conspicuous here as elsewhere in the poem; 'volet' is not really necessary. Cf. ll. 17 ('fecisse volebant'), 54 ('secuisse queat'), 70 ('valuisse potest'), 82 ('licuit transiluisse'), 242 ('possit detinuisse'), 288 ('sustinuisse grave est'), 318 ('poterunt pepulisse'), 416 ('non pudeuisse queat'). An accumulation of verbal forms such as 'credi posse videtur' within a line seems hardly conceivable outside Lucretius; cf. l. 416: 'quarum lecturos non pudeuisse queat'; l. 70: 'artibus hic credi tot valuisse potest'. The perfect infinitive instead of the present one also in *Bonae valetudinis conservandae rationes aliquot*, e.g. ll. 498 ('aluisse solent') and 518 ('dissoluisse solent').

⁵⁸ Again 'decuisse' instead of 'decere' and a questionable use of 'quire'. Note, in this context, the final words of some consecutive pentameters ('erat', l. 346; 'erat', l. 348; 'fuit', line 350; 'queat', line 352). The couplet relies on Erasmus's lines 381–382: 'Decantatur iam passim inter pocula temulentorum adagium: Qui medice vivit, misere vivit' – 'Now the old saw is frequently heard, on the lips of the hard drinkers in their cups, that a man who lives according to medical advice lives miserably' (*Oration* 48).

Sed nisi tu valeas animoque et corpore constes,
 Horum quicquid erit, nullius usus erit.
 Ut valeas medicina docet, quo munere maius
 Largiri regum nullius arca potest.
 Atque ut divina res maiestate verenda est,
 Laudari humano non satis ore potest.
 Quod quia non potuit fieri sermone pedestri,
 Forsitan in versu gratia maior erit (ll. 33–40).

But unless you are healthy in your mind, your body standing firm,
 Nothing of all this will be of any use to you.
 Medicine teaches you to stay healthy –
 Not even the royal money-chest could give you a gift greater than this.
 And as medicine is something venerable because of its grandeur,
 It cannot be adequately praised by human speech.
 Since this was impossible in prose,
 It will perhaps be more agreeable in verse.

In this passage, the repetition in lines 33 and 35 ('nisi tu valeas; ut valeas medicina docet') is effective and reminds us of the Ovidian technique; the accumulation, however, of *erit*, *potest* and *nullius* appears to be of another kind,⁵⁹ and the first pentameter, in which 'nullius' and 'usus' are written in a different case ('usus' has to be a nominative for prosodical reasons), is a bit awkward. In other cases, different forms of repetition (with anaphora, polyptoton, figura etymologica, etc.) work well; they are a frequent and typical feature of this poem.⁶⁰

Poetic embellishments realized through other means, especially digressions, are rare in this paraphrase, in which Eobanus tries to stay as close as possible to the original text and even to compress it somewhat. In a number of cases, though, the language of the paraphrase becomes more lofty and then an Ovidian elegance shines through an infrequent excursus. Take for instance this passage from Erasmus:

⁵⁹ Compare in lines 3–22 the numerous repetitions of forms of *dare* (3, 11, 14, 22) and *munus* (11, 14, 16, 20).

⁶⁰ See e.g. ll. 46 ('dissimiles sexus, dissimilesque situs'), 73–74 ('Sicut enim Deus est, vitam qui donat et aufert / ablatamque potest reddere quando libet'), 101–102 ('Qualia multa ferunt mutant tempora casus, / qualia multa solent corpora nostra pati'), 103 ('Omnibus auxilium medicus tulit, omnibus idem'), 113–114 ('Nam quia nascendi discrimina mille fuerunt, / mille modis haec ars auxiliata fuit'), 123 ('Huius ubique opus est opera'), 131–132 ('Finge relegatos omnes vel ad ultima morbos / limina terrarum, finge dolere nihil'), 135–136 ('Ille docet qui quemque cibi relevent premantve; / convictus legem totius ille docet'), 195 ('Pro vita medicus tot vitae pugnat in hostes'), 231–232 ('Tum fuit in pretio, tum praemia digna ferebat, / tum sacra, tum magnis regibus apta fuit'), 238–240 (*quantis, quantus, quanto*), 249–250 (*plurima, plurima*) and 363–364 (*nulla, nulla, nullos*).

Quot censes homines ante diem sepultos fuisse, priusquam medicorum solertia morborum vires et remediorum naturas deprehenderat? Quot hodie mortaliū milia vivunt valentque, qui ne nati quidem essent, nisi eadem haec ars et tot nascendi discriminibus remedia et obstetricandi rationem repperisset? (Erasmus, ll. 94–97).

How many men, do you reckon, met with untimely burial in the days before medical science had grasped the virulence of diseases and the nature of their cures? How many thousands people are alive and well today who would not even have been born had not this same medical art discovered treatments for the many crises of childbirth and evolved the science of obstetrics? (*Oration* 39).

Quis neget ante diem multos periisse supremum,
 Quod medica tangi non potuere manu?
 Milia quot Stygias innarunt ante paludes
 Quam decuit, medicae quod nihil artis erat?
 Milia quot degunt hodie vitalibus auris,
 Quae tantum nasci contigit huius ope? (ll. 107–112).

Who would deny that many have died prematurely
 Because they could not be given medical assistance?
 How many thousands of people floated upon the swamps of Styx through
 an untimely death
 Because medical art did not exist at all?
 How many thousands are living now in the vital air,
 Who had the chance to be born thanks to this art?

There are but very few digressions proper in Eobanus's paraphrase – some have been discussed earlier. At the end of the poem, Eobanus, using an eminently classical image, compares his work to a voyage at sea:

Sed quis erit modus et quem finem nostra videbunt
 Carmina, si quae sunt scribere plura velim?
 Et portum video et longum mare restat eundum;
 Sed quia praestiterat, litora prima petam (ll. 379–382).

But what limit will there be and what end will my poem see,
 Should I wish to write more (and more there is to written)?
 I see the harbor while a long sea voyage remains to be made;
 But since it is preferable, I will seek the nearest shore,

and thus establishes a parallel with the conclusion of his *Bonae valetudinis conservandae rationes aliquot*, which has the same image:

Plura quidem potui, sed me ceu litore abactum
 Longius, immensi terruit unda freti (ll. 653–654).

I could definitely have written more, but it was as if,
 Driven far off from the shore, I had been terrified by the waves of the
 immense sea.

Furthermore, Eobanus amplifies the notion of the doctor's ability to exercise his profession the world over:

Adde quod ceterarum artium non ubique paratus est quaestus. [...] Medicum, quoquo terrarum sese contulerit, suus comitatur honos, suum sequitur viaticum [...] (Erasmus, ll. 358–361).

There is the additional fact that the other arts cannot be profitably pursued everywhere. [...] Wherever in the world the physician goes, he finds that honour and a livelihood are afforded him [...] (*Oration* 47).

Una ubicumque satis praestat medicina lucelli
 Terrarum, quamvis ad Garamantas eas.
 I, pete climatibus contraria climata nostris,
 I, pete caelivagi⁶¹ solis utrumque larem:
 Invenies quo mox ditescas fenore; vitam
 Nam petit et medica gens eget omnis ope (ll. 337–342).

The world over medicine alone can offer enough profit,
 Even were you to go to the Garamantian lands.
 Go now, travel to regions opposite to our regions,
 Come now, travel to the two abodes of the heaven-wandering sun:
 You will soon find the way to grow rich in profit:
 Every nation longs to live and needs medical assistance.

Finally, a short digression, employing traditional poetic images, and following the rhetorical principle that 'la grandeur du vainqueur dérive de la grandeur du vaincu', illustrates the ravages of sicknesses and hence the extraordinary efficacy of the physicians who manage to cure them all:

Morborum siquidem vis obruit, ut freta ventis
 Concita fluctivagas⁶² saepe tulere rates;
 Non secus ac radiis caecas sol aureus umbras,
 Morborum medicus dispulit omne genus (ll. 219–222).

The violence of diseases oppresses man just as the sea, swollen by the winds,
 Has often swept away the vessels driven about the waves;

⁶¹ The last four words of this verse were recycled by the poet from his *Heroidum Christianarum epistolae*, 21, l. 74 ('inter caelivagi solis utrumque larem'); cf. Vredevelt H. (ed.), *The Poetic Works of Helius Eobanus Hessus*, vol. II: *Journeyman Years, 1509–1514*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 333 (Tempe: 2008) 394; for the word *caelivagus*, see Vredevelt's note at *Her.* 9, 76 (ibidem 533). *Caelivagus* was unknown in Antiquity; it became very popular in Neo-Latin (see also R.J. Schoeck R.J. – Rütt M. – Bartz H.-W., "A Step towards a Neo-Latin Lexicon: A First Word-List Drawn from *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 1973–1984", *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 39 (1990) (340–365) 349.

⁶² The composite noun *fluctivagus* (attested in Statius and other poets) betrays the poet's enthusiasm, just as *caelivagus* in l. 340 (see previous note) and *voluptificus* (a hapax from Apuleius) in l. 243.

In the same way as the golden sun drives the shadows away with its rays,
The doctor dispels every kind of disease.

More often, however, it is the poet's concision which strikes the reader; many of Eobanus's couplets come close to autonomous epigrams and constitute *sententiae* in their own; in these cases, the rather prosaic vocabulary⁶³ does not disturb the reader but somehow adds to the gnomic value of the thought. Such couplets include:

Quod si est esse deum plures iuvisse, vel hoc est
In medico verum vel ratione caret (ll. 117–118).⁶⁴

If to be a god is to assist many people, then this is true for a doctor, or the proposition is absurd.

Res gravis est et, ut est, sic omnibus esse videtur
Infirmo reptans curva senecta gradu (ll. 137–138).⁶⁵

Old age, crawling with feeble steps, bent by age, is a burden and
Seems so, as it actually is, to all people.

Qui volet ergo animo bene constanterque valere,
Si facit ut valeat corpore, sanus erit (ll. 181–182).⁶⁶

Thus he who wants to be in a steady and sound condition of conscience,
Will be healthy if he makes sure to be in a condition of physical health.

Nemo magis fidus medico, qui tempore duro
Ipse quoque, ut valeas, multa pericla subit (ll. 281–282).⁶⁷

⁶³ Which one can also find (though to a lesser degree) in the *Bonae valetudinis conservandae rationes aliquot*, e.g. ll. 281–282: 'Qui [*cibi*] quia sunt vari nec ab una lege petendi, / refert accipias quosve quibusve modis'.

⁶⁴ Cf. Erasmus, ll. 101–104: 'Quod si vere dictum est illud *Deus est iuvare mortalem*, profecto mea sententia [...] in medico fido proboque locum habebit, qui non iuvat modo, verum etiam servat'. – 'And if there is any truth in the saying "It is godlike for mortal to assist mortal", then I am convinced that the only true exemplar [...] will be the trusty and virtuous physician who not only assists but also saves' (*Oration* 39).

⁶⁵ Cf. Erasmus, ll. 112–114: 'Grave mortalibus est onus senecta, quam non magis licet effugere quam mortem ipsam. Atque ea medicorum opera mulis contingit tum serius tum multo etiam levior'. – 'Old age is a heavy burden for mankind to bear, and one we can no more escape than death itself. Yet thanks to that craft of the physician, the burden of old age can be considerably lightened for many people' (*Oration* 39).

⁶⁶ Cf. Erasmus, ll. 143–144: 'Caeterum quoniam is [*animus*] corpori illigatus corporeis organis velit nolit utitur, fit ut bona pars bonae mentis a corporis habitu pendeat' – 'But since the conscience, being bound up with the body, expresses itself willy-nilly through the instrument of the body, it follows that a good conscience depends in good measure upon the state of the body' (*Oration* 40).

⁶⁷ Cf. Erasmus, ll. 310 and 316–317: 'At quanto syncerior amicus medicus! [...] adest pro capite periclitantis cum morbo dimicans, nonnunquam suo quoque periculo' – 'But how much more genuine a friend is the physician [...]. [...] is there to contend with

Nobody is a more loyal friend than the doctor who in hard times
Takes many personal risks to make sure that you be healthy.

Sunt quoque qui medicos impune occidere clamant:
Quod poterant, virtus non voluisse fuit! (ll. 349–350).⁶⁸

There are some people, too, who declare loudly that doctors take life with
impunity;
They could do so, but it is their virtue not to have wished to do so!

Most of the time the poet thus succeeds in adapting Erasmus's prose to terse and clear verse, not seldom with a concision that resembles Ovid's most gnomic passages. Let us take a look at two final examples. In the first one, Eobanus keeps closely, as he sometimes does, to Erasmus's vocabulary, but avoids the latter's repetition; the argument is about human worries concerning material trivialities as opposed to the neglect of his most important treasure, good health:

Sed O heu perversissima hominum iudicia! Nemo nescire sustinet, quis nummus legitimus sit, quis adulterinus, ne quid fallatur in re vilissima; nec scire studio est, quibus modis id quod est optimum, tueatur. In nomismate non credit alienis oculis [...] (Erasmus, ll. 296–299).

But alas for the extreme perversity of human judgment! While no man will remain ignorant of the difference between genuine and counterfeit coin, lest he be cheated some way in matters of gross materialism, there is no corresponding zeal to discover how he can protect his most valuable possession. In monetary matters he does not trust to somebody else's eyes [...] (*Oration* 45).

Iudicia heu perversa hominum! Nescire pudendum
Creditur infausti vilia damna lucri;
Scire pudet quamam possint ratione tueri
Lucrum, quo maius fata dedere nihil (ll. 275–278).

Alas the perverse judgments of men! They think it shameful to be unaware
Of the trivial loss of some wretched gain;

the disease for the life of the critically ill, and thereby frequently puts his own life at risk' (*Oration* 46).

⁶⁸ Cf. Erasmus, ll. 377–381: 'Solis, inquit, medicis summa occidendi impunitas est. At hoc nomine magis suscipiendi boni medici, quibus cum in manu sit non solum impune verum etiam mercede occidere, tamen servare malunt. Quod possunt, facultatis est; quod nolunt, probitatis' – 'They say that physicians alone are allowed to take life with absolute impunity. But in this context good physicians are the more to be esteemed, since, although it lies within their power to take life, not only with impunity but also to their financial gain, they nevertheless prefer to save life. That they have the opportunity is due to their profession; that they decline it, to their moral integrity' (*Oration* 48).

But they are ashamed to be aware of the method by which they might
protect
The greatest gain fate has given to them.

In the second example, Eobanus compresses Erasmus's argument that a doctor is like a most loyal friend, who does not flee when you are in pain, but stands by your side, and, even at the cost of his own life, tries to put you back on your feet. Erasmus added a remarkable comparison with certain birds, a comparison, one would suppose, well suited to an apt poetic rendering; Eobanus, however, leaves out the birds, prefers a concise diction and reduces the lengthy exposition to a powerful unit:

Semper apud efferas etiam ac barbaras nationes sanctum ac venerabile fuit amicitiae nomen, atque is egregius habetur amicus qui se fortunae utriusque comitem sociumque praebeat, quod vulgus amicorum, velut hirundines aestate, rebus secundis adsint, rebus adversis, quemadmodum illae ingruente bruma, devolant [sic]. At quanto syncerior amicus medicus! Qui Seleucidum avium exemplo, quas narrant numquam a Casii montis incolis conspici, nisi cum illarum praesidio est opus adversus vim locustarum fruges vastantium, rebus integris ac laetis numquam se ingerit; in periculis, in his casibus in quibus uxor ac liberi saepe deserunt hominem, velut in phrenesi, in phthiriasi, in peste, solus medicus constanter adest, et adest non inutilli officio quemadmodum plerique ceterorum, sed adest opitulaturus, adest pro capite periclitantis cum morbo dimicans, nonnumquam suo quoque periculo (Erasmus, ll. 306–317).

Even among wild and barbarous peoples the word 'friendship' was always held in awe and respect, and the friend par excellence is held to be he who shows himself a companion and ally in good times and in bad, because the common run of friends, like the swallows in summer, are present in times of prosperity, but in times of adversity they fly away, like swallows at the approach of winter. But how much more genuine a friend is the physician, he who, after the fashion of the birds of Seleucis (which, they say, are never seen by the inhabitants of Mount Casius except when their protection is needed against a plague of locusts destroying their crops), never intrudes himself upon those who are hale and hearty. But in times of peril, in these adversities in which wife and children often abandon a man, such as in cases of phthiriasis, consumption, or pestilence, the physician alone is constant in his attendance, and he is present, unlike many others, not out of mere sense of duty, ineffective as that is, but is there to give practical help, is there to contend with the disease for the life of the critically ill, and thereby frequently puts his own life at risk (*Oration* 45–46).

Quod si fortis erit, si verus habetur amicus,
Fortunam socius qui per utramque manet,
nemo magis fidus medico, qui tempore duro
ipse quoque ut valeas multa pericla subit.

Cum fugiunt agnati omnes, hic solus adhaeret
 Quamque alii nequeunt, monstrat et addit opem (ll. 279–284).

If he who remains your companion in good and in bad days,
 Is regarded as a steadfast, as a genuine friend,
 Nobody is a more loyal friend than the doctor who in hard times
 Takes many personal risks to make sure that you be healthy.
 When all kinsmen flee you, he alone keeps close to you
 And gives advice and offers the practical assistance others cannot give.

To sum up, Eobanus's aim while rendering Erasmus's work in verse, was to stick as closely as possible to the contents and the structure of Erasmus's declamation, while leaving out the repetitions of his model and condensing the original text. His paraphrase is a faithful mirror of Erasmus's work, but not a mechanical one: the poet judiciously pondered the value of the arguments Erasmus had advanced in favor of the art of medicine and left out some points he considered feeble; he appropriated the text and sometimes stressed or left out points in accordance with his own situation and aspirations, or with the intellectual climate he was working in at the time. Poetically, his elegiac couplets aimed at faithfulness to the original text and did not focus on displaying external embellishment; while presenting some of the poetical techniques he had used in his major works, Eobanus here paid relatively more attention to the epigrammatical and gnomic value of his couplets; his style paralleled that of the other medical verses of the volume this paraphrase was issued in, and more specifically that of the *Bonae valetudinis conservandae rationes aliquot*. A comparison of this poetical rendering and, e.g., the paraphrase into elegiac couplets of Erasmus's *De civitate morum puerilium libellus* by Franciscus Haemus (1521–1585), a poet active in West Flanders in the second half of the sixteenth century (admittedly, this paraphrase was conceived for a different public, one of youngsters)⁶⁹ suggests that Eobanus's *Encomium* does not deserve the severe qualification of being a clumsily versified work.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Poemata Francisci Haemi Insulani* [...] (Antwerp, Franciscus Haemus: 1578) 246–274. An article on this poem is in preparation.

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PART II

RELIGIOUS IDEAS

UNIVERSALISM AND TOLERANCE IN A FOLLOWER OF ERASMUS
FROM ZURICH: THEODOR BIBLIANDER

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The Zurich theologian Theodor Bibliander is portrayed in the *Historiae ecclesiasticae Novi Testamenti* by Johann Heinrich Hottinger as a ‘fully Erasmian’¹ man. However, his role as Erasmus’s heir, as well as his own achievements, has until recently remained unacknowledged.² Such oblivion is fully unjustified in view of both Bibliander’s personal activities and his importance in the reception of Erasmus’s thought. Bibliander espoused several central ideas of Erasmus – from free will to the limitless mercy of God – and also included a fundamentally ethical and a-dogmatic notion of Christianity, as well as the tolerant, pacifist, and universalistic vision deriving from it. On these bases, however, he created an original and bold conception, showing himself to be a worthy follower of his master’s anti-dogmatism.

Bibliander’s thought and cultural activities led him to widespread fame and to an avant-garde position in relation to his times. As Zwingli’s successor to the Chair of Holy Scripture at Zurich, Theodor Buchmann, called Bibliander (1505–1564), consecrated himself to theology and exegesis, giving them sound foundations through the critical-philological method and the study of classical and oriental languages. He became the major European Hebrew scholar and the ‘father’ of modern exegesis.³ His activity was framed within a cultural vision forged by Erasmus and by Neo-Platonism, which aimed to examine knowledge of the divine in its different historical manifestations, as well as the recomposition of fragments of truth within a unitary and universalistic framework. Christianity, conceived of in its ethical essence, was the unifying factor; linguistic knowledge and theological

¹ Hottinger Johann Heinrich, *Historiae ecclesiasticae Novi Testamenti, Pars prima* (Hanover, Michael Schaufelberger: 1655), vol. VIII, 689.

² The only monographic study on Bibliander is the rather old volume by Egli E., *Analecta Reformatoria, Theodor Bibliander* (Zurich: 1901), vol. II, 1–144. See also *Theodor Bibliander (1505–1564). Ein Thurgauer im gelehrten Zürich der Reformationszeit*, ed. Christ-von Wedel C. (Zurich: 2005). Further bibliography in the following notes.

³ Hottinger Johann Heinrich, *Schola Tigurinorum Carolina* (Zurich, J.H. Hamberger: 1664) 48; 72.

knowledge were the tools; the reconciliation of the whole of humanity in the religious and political sphere was the ultimate goal. The realization of this event was projected by Bibliander onto the apocalyptic scenario of the coming of the future kingdom of Christ, an eternal kingdom destined to welcome all men. Bibliander's conception was Christian-centric and Eurocentric – the problem of the *indios* was foreign to him, and he principally devoted his attention to the three monotheistic religions, of which he considered Christianity the superior one. However, he formulated the theoretical basis for a reappraisal of religions and cultures of all types and from all time periods, and for their ultimate acceptance into the *regnum Dei*. The idea of tolerance emerging from his conception was boundless, and the attitude toward the 'other', because of its incipient comparative perspective, was innovative. Pierre Bayle therefore rightly defined Bibliander 'un homme fort universel' and considered him a protagonist of sixteenth-century universalism.⁴

Bibliander produced an extremely vast scholarly output, most of which is still unpublished.⁵ Among his most important publications were a Hebrew grammar (1535, the best at that time), the first Latin edition of the Koran accompanied by a monumental corpus of writings on Islamic civilization (1543), *De ratione communi omnium linguarum et literarum commentarius* (1548), a revolutionary project on linguistic and religious unification by means of the identification of laws common to different faiths and idioms, *De fatis monarchiae Romanae somnium vaticinium Esdrae prophetae* (1553), an interpretation of Esdrah's prophecy in view of a vast work of evangelization and pacification of all of the peoples of the world anticipated by the Holy Roman Empire. Also worth mentioning are his attempts to translate the Bible into Arabic and his study of other civilizations, starting with the Islamic one.

Bibliander dedicated his whole life to the project of religious concord, and he sacrificed his old age for it, since he was forced to leave his university position because of the opposition of Pietro Martire Vermigli, a champion of the predestination doctrine. His youthful education under the guidance of the theologians Johannes Oecolampadius and Oswald

⁴ Bayle Pierre, *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (Rotterdam, Reinier Leers: 1697), vol. I, 1, 584. On his universalism, see Rotondò A., "Anticristo e Chiesa romana. Diffusione e metamorfosi d' un libello antiromano del Cinquecento", now in Rotondò A., *Studi di storia ereticale* vol. I, 54–59; Felici L., "Ai confini della Respublica Christiana. La visione irenica di Theodor Bibliander" in Hermanin C. – Simonutti L. (eds.), *La centralità del dubbio. Un progetto di Antonio Rotondò* (Florence: 2011) vol. II, 899–921.

⁵ The corpus of Bibliander's works and letters is preserved at Zurich Zentralbibliothek.

Myconius, as well as of the great Greek and Hebrew scholar Conrad Pellikan (all of whom had shared with Erasmus intellectual pursuits as well as cultural and religious ideals),⁶ was decisive. The stimuli received from them were further expanded upon in Zürich, where Bibliander became a pupil of Leo Jud and Ulrich Zwingli.

Under the influence of its leaders, Zwingli and Bullinger, the Reformation in Zürich was characterized by a profound connection to the humanistic movement, particularly to Erasmus. The Dutch humanist was considered a leading figure of biblical exegesis – of which he always remained *the* authority – but also an essential point of reference in a religious and pedagogical ambit. Erasmus never visited Zürich, but his works enjoyed considerable success there even after his falling-out with Luther. Their penetration was helped by the translations and publications started by Jud in 1521. Zürich printing presses were responsible for the appearance of the *Enchiridion*, the *Querela pacis*, the *Institutio principis Christiani*, the *Novum instrumentum*, and the *Paraphrases* (accompanied by an exposition of the *Apocalypse* by Pellikan). The education of the young elite in Zürich was based on Erasmus's texts, from the didactic book on Latin to the editions of the classics and of the Fathers of the Church, while the fully glossed *Novum instrumentum* and the *Paraphrases* were the basis for the exegetic and pastoral activities of the Reformers. It is perhaps superfluous to remind ourselves of the importance that the writings of Erasmus had in the elaboration of Zwingli's theory of the Eucharist, and in his critique of the Roman church. As a last sign of homage, the image of Erasmus was included among the portraits of scholars and Reformers frescoed in the house of Christoph Froschauer the Younger.⁷

In Bibliander's case, too, the reception of Erasmus is highly visible, even without the systematic textual comparisons carried out in this article. In Basel and Zürich Bibliander not only assimilated the Erasmian philological method – which he then applied in his exegetical work⁸ – but learnt to

⁶ The only comprehensive study on the two theologians is Hagenbach K.R., *Johann Oekolampad und Oswald Myconius. Die Reformatoren Basels. Leben und ausgewählte Schriften* (Elberfeld: 1859). On Pellikan, see Zürcher C., *Konrad Pellikan's Wirken in Zürich, 1526–1556* (Zürich: 1975); and also the older study by Silberstein E., *Konrad Pellikan. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Studien der hebräischen Sprache im 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: 1900).

⁷ Christ-von Wedel C. – Leu U.B. (eds.), *Erasmus in Zürich. Eine verschwiegene Autorität* (Zürich: 2007). Photos of the frescoes on 362ff.

⁸ Christ-von Wedel C., "Erasmus und die Zürcher Reformatoren. Huldreich Zwingli, Leo Jud, Konrad Pellikan, Heinrich Bullinger und Theodor Bibliander", in Christ-von Wedel – Leu, *Erasmus in Zürich* 157–159; 162.

use it as a critical tool against theologians and as the pillar of a new religion: for Bibliander, as for Erasmus before him, 'grammatica', conceived of as a means of restoring the original truth of the sacred texts, was firmly set against doctrinal interpretations that were distant from the evangelical message and a source of continuous and lacerating controversies.⁹ Dogmatic thoughts were replaced with the Erasmian *philosophia Christi*, centred on the imitation of Christ and on his message of love and charity. Indifferent to dogmatism and external rituals and institutions, this religion is freely chosen through uncorrupted reason, which is illuminated by God, and is confident in the universal extension of salvation thanks to the immensity of divine grace.¹⁰

If the religious conception of Erasmus was the basis of Bibliander's theological reflection, the radical universalistic outcomes at which he arrived were fully original. His starting point was the postulate of universal election to salvation, an act freely willed by an immensely charitable God and manifested in the law of nature inscribed in human reason, ideas that Erasmus had defended in *De libero arbitrio diatribe sive collatio* and in *De immensa Dei misericordia concio* (1524).¹¹ However, Bibliander later foresaw a *Respublica Christiana* open to all potential receivers of the evangelical message of love and charity, each valued as an expression of the perennial divine revelation. Bibliander developed Erasmus's origenism¹² not only into a powerful weapon against reformed predestination theories,

⁹ Bibliander Theodor, *De monarchia totius orbis suprema, legitima, et sempiterna quod regnum est et sacerdotium Messiae filii Davidis secundum carnem, filii autem dei vivi aeterna generatione* (unpublished: 1553) fol. 13r: 'Non theologiae doctor [...] non pastor et magister ecclesiae, non evangelista, non propheta [...] sed grammatista sum, et ponderator verborum'. See also the letter to Myconius, 1535, in Hottinger, *Historiae ecclesiasticae* VIII, 691 f. On Erasmus, see Asso C., *La teologia e la grammatica. La controversia tra Erasmo ed Edward Lee* (Florence: 1993).

¹⁰ The concept of the *philosophia Christi* was, as it is known, presented in the *Enchiridion militis Christiani*, developed in the *Ratio verae Theologiae*, and celebrated in the *Paraclesis*. From the enormous bibliography on Erasmus I, only refer to some fundamental contributions: Bainton R. H., *Erasmus of Christendom* (New York: 1969); Augustijn C., *Erasmus. His Life, Works, and Influence* (Toronto: 1991); Halkin L.-E., *Erasmus. A Critical Biography* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1994); Rummel E., *Erasmus* (London-New York: 2004).

¹¹ On *De libero arbitrio*, see Pintacuda De Michelis F., *Tra Erasmo e Lutero* (Rome: 2001); Winters A., *Erasmus' Doctrine on Free Will* (Jackson, TN: 2005). On the *Concio*, see Seidel Menchi S., *Erasmo in Italia, 1520-1580* (Torino: 1987), chap. VI; Felici L., "L'immensa bontà di Dio. Diffusione e adattamenti dell'idea erasmiana in Italia e in Svizzera", in Baldini A.E. – Firpo M. (eds.), *Politica e cultura in Erasmo da Rotterdam* (Rome: 2012) 129-157.

¹² Godin A., *Érasme lecteur d'Origène* (Geneva: 1982). More broadly on Erasmian cosmopolitanism, see Thompson C.R., "Erasmus as Internationalist and Cosmopolitan", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 46 (1955) 167ff.; Scuccimarra L., *I confini del mondo. Storia del cosmopolitismo dall'Antichità al Settecento* (Bologna: 2006) 142ff.

but also into a principle capable of undermining the fundamentals of ecclesiastical institutions, theological doctrines, and consolidated mental habits toward otherness.

The centrality of this conception for Bibliander is affirmed by its constant presence in his works, starting with the earliest, the *Oratio ad enarrationem Esaiæ prophetarum principis*. The oration was delivered by Bibliander at the Grossmünster in Zurich in January 1532 to inaugurate his Chair of Holy Scripture, and it was dedicated to his masters Pellikan and Jud.¹³ The text already contains a defined cultural and religious program. The main subject was the problem of prophecy, but the analysis branched out to include the fundamentals and modality of revelation, in order to then enucleate the principles of the universalistic conception. The reflection on prophecy would prove fundamental for Bibliander's future exegetic activity, particularly in terms of the elaboration of his apocalyptic and, broadly speaking, religious vision; it therefore deserves particular attention. Moreover, although charisma was not particularly important in Erasmus's thought, his ideas contributed to Bibliander's discourse, motivating its development and outcomes.

Bibliander identified prophecy with theology. This coincidence between direct revelation and speculation on God was in itself unconventional and full of consequences for dogmatism and ecclesiastical institutions, since it negated the very possibility of a monopoly on the sacred by all churches, while simultaneously opening an extremely wide horizon regarding the relationship between man and God. To Bibliander's reflection, Erasmus's positive emphasis on the immediacy and spirituality of this relationship – to the detriment of its institutional and ritual manifestations – and his search for principles on which to base it and the idea of a global *ecumene*, as well as his methodological and exegetic *habitus*, were potent stimuli.

Bibliander supported his thesis with recourse to the Bible and to a rigorous etymologic analysis. Charismatic activity could be defined in terms of *prophetia*, *visio*, or *theologia*, since in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew the prophet was he who by divine inspiration foresaw the future and penetrated into 'divine things'; in Greek prophets were also called theologians because, following the etymology of the word (θεός and λόγος), they knew 'the path, the way, the reason to hear and talk righteously to God'.¹⁴ True theologians, however, were first pious and then wise ('not only θεολόγους,

¹³ Printed in Zurich by Christoph Froschauer in 1532.

¹⁴ Bibliander, *Oratio* fol. 11v, 12v, 13v, 27r, 28r. [etc.]

but above all θεοσεβείας'), given that their comprehension of truth was a result of spiritual enlightenment: for Bibliander the spirit represented the guide to religious and exegetic activity, the source of the norms of life.¹⁵ The sphere of action of prophets-theologians was extended by Bibliander (in this manner following Zwingli) to the *res gestae*, that is, to symbolic or real acts anticipating those of Christ and the apostles.¹⁶

For Bibliander, the truth of prophecy was absolute.¹⁷ The heavenly provenance of the prophetic message made it 'most full and absolute' and 'eternal', even if it was spoken by unworthy persons – including emissaries of Satan¹⁸ – or expressed in an obscure and indeterminate manner. The obscurity and indeterminacy of revelations were led back to the attempt at translating the divine message into a language consonant with the times, while all ecstatic component 'in the customs of the fanatics'¹⁹ was excluded. This attempt to historicize the manifestations of prophecy perhaps anticipated Spinoza's critique of the supernatural²⁰ and kept within the framework of the Erasmian critical method. For Bibliander, the prophet represented 'the salt of the earth, the light of the world' and was invested by God with the high responsibility of showing the path of truth to the faithful, surpassing the often fallacious and limited human interpreters.²¹

The role assigned by Bibliander to prophetic charisma was therefore crucial in his religious discourse; prophecy, or direct revelation from God, was the true *vox Dei*, the main means of communication with and interpretation of divine truth, a beacon orienting the path of humanity and the fullest expression of the science of the divine. Such centrality of direct and universal communication from God led, obviously, to a major subversion of traditional conceptions and hierarchies. It is true that Bibliander felt the need to legitimize the existence of ecclesiastical functions (his aim, he said, was to 'seek truth, not flaunt novelty'),²² but he forcefully

¹⁵ Bibliander, *Oratio* fol. 13r.

¹⁶ Bibliander, *Oratio* fols. 28r-29r. Bibliander based himself on the *Annotationes in Genesim, Exodum, Esaïam et Iereminam prophetas*.

¹⁷ Bibliander, *Oratio* fol. 29v.

¹⁸ Bibliander, *Oratio* fols. 22r, 28r.

¹⁹ Bibliander, *Oratio* fol. 29v.

²⁰ Spinoza Baruch, "Tractatus Theologicus-Politicus", chap. VI, in Spinoza Baruch, *Opera*, ed. C. Gebhardt, 4 vols. (Heidelberg: 1925, reprinted Heidelberg: 1972).

²¹ Bibliander, *Oratio* fols. 16r, 23v, 28r.

²² Bibliander, *Oratio* fols. 13v, 14r, 15r-v.

demonstrated the limitlessness of divine revelation and the multiplicity of its manifestations outside of religious institutions.

Bibliander's rigorous analysis of Holy Scripture also bore proof that prophecy had brought life to the whole history of the Christian church.²³ He did not limit the title of prophet to ecclesiastics, but extended it to those who operated for the promotion of divine truth ('spiritual doctors, sacred orators, teachers of life', etc.).²⁴ Moreover, neither God's revelation nor his salvation design was restricted to the Christian citadel, since 'in all times and in all peoples' there have been men who, because of their distinction in ethical and religious principles, became guides in the sacred and the profane, revealing themselves to be active elements in God's providential plan.²⁵ The similarities among prophetic lives from 'the most different times and places' were presented as proof of the unity of God's design of salvation.²⁶

Numerous examples were discussed by Bibliander to demonstrate the existence of the divine plan: the vast world of ancient and oriental civilizations, from Persia to India, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as well as the barbaric territories with their own expressive, poetic, and oracular forms, offered a vast array of 'seekers of truth' who are to be considered 'instruments' of God.²⁷ By uttering 'many things [...] on God consonant with sacred doctrines', these figures had revealed their nature as messengers of eternal truth, and on these grounds they could not be excluded from salvation; on the contrary, 'How could I say that God wanted to exclude them? He most ardently desired to teach His word, to swiftly bring to all men the knowledge of truth and to make them participant in eternal salvation'.²⁸ Bibliander conceded that their language and behaviour had not always been exempt from ambiguity and error. On the other hand, the word of God had constantly been susceptible to corruption by false interpreters. However, he held the firm conviction that God spread his gifts everywhere, like 'gems among basilisks and scorpions, gold in dung, silver among vile metals', and that a Christian had the most daunting duty of individuating celestial truth in this 'mare magnum' of errors, and then announcing it.²⁹

²³ Bibliander, *Oratio* fol. 15v.

²⁴ Bibliander, *Oratio* fol. 16r.

²⁵ Bibliander, *Oratio* fols. 16v–17r.

²⁶ Bibliander, *Oratio* fol. 17r.

²⁷ Bibliander, *Oratio* fols. 18r ff.

²⁸ Bibliander, *Oratio* fol. 20v.

²⁹ Bibliander, *Oratio* fol. 21r.

The idea of the universal extension of divine revelation rests on a potent assumption – the notion of God as a ‘commonwealth’ of creation, as the giver of the universal law of nature and salvation. The image of an extraordinarily merciful and caring godhead which did not exclude anybody from eternal life was so described by Bibliander: ‘He leaves nothing outside of His goodness and providence, He provides for and regulates, governs all and nothing can exist outside of Him’.³⁰ The oneness of the principle, of course, did not eliminate the variety of its manifestations, which reached greater or lesser degrees of clarity according to circumstances.³¹ The echo of Erasmus’s *Concio* is here most clear: ‘In the prophetic books God is frequently called ‘merciful’ and ‘the merciful one’, because of the surpassing magnitude of His mercy’.³²

The universal reality of salvation appeared to Bibliander to be undisputable in view of the laws of nature inscribed by God in mankind: ‘Hence God is the commonwealth of truth, the usufruct of which He conceded to ethnic peoples also, and He impressed the laws in their heart. And such laws we call the laws of nature’.³³ Laws of nature imprinted religious, normative, and ethical principles in accordance with divine will, and were present in the whole of mankind.³⁴ The position that Bibliander assigned them within the human body made his perspective even more audacious: behind the classic formula ‘in the heart of man’ hid human reason, the foremost instrument of investigation into creation because of its divine nature. Human reason, Bibliander declared, echoing an important theme of the *Enchiridion*, was comparable to divine reason because of the ‘divine spark’ it harboured: ‘this spark placed by the mind of God, creator of all, in the mortal breast, is similar, since it is the divine face reflected in the human mind’.³⁵ In conclusion, in Bibliander’s thought, religion – that is, Christianity – appears to find its nucleus in ethics and its instrument in reason, loosing dogmatic and confessional traits in order to become a universal rule of life.

Such a concept was reaffirmed by Bibliander in a later work, significantly titled *Christianismus sempiternus, verus certus et immutabilis, in quo*

³⁰ Bibliander, *Oratio*.

³¹ Bibliander, *Oratio*.

³² Erasmus of Rotterdam, *A Sermon on the Immense Mercy of God, Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto-Buffalo-London: 1998), vol. 70, 88 (LB V 563B).

³³ Bibliander, *Oratio* fol. 17r–v.

³⁴ Bibliander, *Oratio* fol. 17v.

³⁵ Bibliander, *Oratio* fol. 22v; Erasmus of Rotterdam, *The Handbook of the Christian Soldier, Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto-Buffalo-London: 1988), vol. 66, 41–43 (LB V 12D-14A).

solo possunt homines beari. Therein he demonstrated the existence of a 'science of righteous living', which since the beginning of time had been shared by Christians, Jews, Muslims, and pagans, and hence represented the basis for religious concord. The particular form of this science was Christianity.³⁶

The quest for the dispersed tesserae of the divine mosaic, already championed by humanists and Erasmus, reveals the central role that Bibliander assigned to knowledge in both religious and cross-cultural terms. Such an attitude lies at the root of his work on Islamic civilization, inaugurated with the first Latin publication of the Koran. On the religious front, knowledge allowed the elimination of deviations from Christianity, above all those relating to divine predestination. Such doctrine was seen as deriving from ignorance of the universal destiny of salvation and leading to an incorrect appraisal of human behaviour. In the *Oratio* Bibliander limited himself to this latter problem, to conclude that human errors were not signs of predestination to damnation, but rather the result of free will and susceptible to pardon by the Lord.³⁷ As Erasmus had already done in the controversy with Luther, Bibliander balanced the affirmation of an optimistic image of God and of human destiny with a vindication of the role of free will.

The publication of the *Oratio* marked the beginning of a long struggle against the doctrine of predestination and its supporters. Foremost among them was the leader of the Basel church Oswald Myconius, with whom Bibliander had a vigorous epistolary exchange between 1535 and 1552; it was only thanks to Bullinger's intervention that this exchange did not become public.³⁸ Following this interaction, Myconius stated that Bibliander was 'fully Erasmian'.³⁹ That his beliefs on predestination were closer to those of Erasmus than those of Luther was already known.⁴⁰ In his letters Bibliander grounded his categorical refusal of predestination in

³⁶ Published in Zürich by Christoph Froschauer in 1556. Bibliander highlighted the exegesis of the Gospels as the way to solve the thorniest doctrinal questions among various religions and Christianity itself. For an exposition of his ideas, see *Praefatio* 2–6. Significantly, he praised Erasmus's *Paraphrases* as a fundamental text for both scholars and pious men: Bibliander Theodor, *Sermo in monte Sinai* (Basel, Johannes Oporin: 1552) III.

³⁷ Bibliander, *Oratio* fols. 22v–23r.

³⁸ Bullinger's letter to Bibliander, 1552, in Hottinger, *Historiae ecclesiasticae* 716ff. The letter is published by Rainer H., in *Theodor Bibliander. Ein Thurgauer* 139–143. On the controversy, see Egli, *Theodor Bibliander* 70ff.

³⁹ Hottinger, *Historiae ecclesiasticae* 726.

⁴⁰ Hottinger, *Historiae ecclesiasticae* 689, 705 f. Hottinger reported Jacob Alting's testimony, according to which Bibliander 'ex lectione scriptorum Erasmi adversus Lutherus

Erasmus's idea of the infinite mercy of God. In open opposition to Zwingli, he defined predestination as an 'inopportune, untimely, inept, dull, frivolous, false, pestilential' concept leading to 'aversion to mercy' and lacking foundations in Holy Scripture.⁴¹ His drastic judgement was born out of his belief in the benign nature of God and of his design, revealed and fulfilled by Christ with his sacrifice. 'What indeed is more absurd' than God sentencing his creatures to death, given that justice and clemency are his foremost attributes?⁴² The Scriptures, as the 'book of life', simply indicated the 'way of life'. With a polemical *vis* reminiscent of the *Encomium moriae*, Bibliander attacked those who used the sacred text as a field for theological disputes rather than as a source of spiritual and moral teachings, 'as if the kingdom of God were in the sermon rather than in virtue'.⁴³

The controversy with Myconius and the following one with Vermigli led Bibliander to further delve into the problem of predestination and divine prescience in his published and unpublished writings. Marking a strong discontinuity with Zwingli and similarly to Erasmus, he distinguished between God's prescience of events and the selection *ab aeterno* of humans. The existence of prescience was allowed for by Zwingli as deriving from the omniscience of the Father. It allowed God to foreknow the destiny of humans, particularly that of the individual's faith in Christ, by virtue of which the process of justification, election, and salvation could take place.⁴⁴ The gift of faith was universal, but the decision of whether to cultivate it was, according to Bibliander, an act of free will. This choice was defining with respect to predestination to salvation or damnation.⁴⁵ Divine prescience was therefore a kind of foreseeing knowledge different

hauserat errores ipsius, imprimis de praedestinatione'. See Alting Johann Heinrich, *Theologia historica*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam: 1664), vol. IV, 300.

⁴¹ Hottinger, *Historiae ecclesiasticae* 693 f. [etc.].

⁴² Hottinger, *Historiae ecclesiasticae* 694 f.: 'Quomodo potest veracissimus, sanctissimus, optimum, immutabilis Deus aliud cogere, aliud mandare? Quomodo erunt intelligendae voces divinae: Deus nolens iniquitatem; Haec est voluntas Dei, sancificatio vestra. Nolo mortem peccatoris, sed magis ut convertatur et vivat? [...] Quid vero absurdius, quam dici de Deo, aliud velle ipsum, aliud agere. Nam in permittendo malefacta, cum placeant sancta, iubeatque sancta, conspicua est iustitiae ratio'.

⁴³ Hottinger, *Historiae ecclesiasticae* 693. Erasmus of Rotterdam, *Praise of folly*, *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto-Buffalo-London: 1986), vol. 27, 126ff. (LB IV 462C ff.).

⁴⁴ Bibliander Theodor, *De summo bono, et hominis felicitate summaque perfectione sive de perfecta restitutione generis humani per dei filium incarnatum* (s.d., but probably post 1550), at Zurich in the Zentralbibliothek, Ms. Car. I 93. The manuscript pages are not numbered.

⁴⁵ Bibliander's letter to Oswald Myconius, 1535, in Hottinger, *Historiae ecclesiasticae*, 691ff., in particular 697–699.

from determinism. Conversely, the idea that God could predestine his creatures to a fate of damnation appeared to him to be antithetical to Christianity, the basic tenet of which is that 'the promise of grace is universal and immutable'.⁴⁶

For Bibliander the relationship between man and God was not founded on the 'horrible decree' of predestination, but on the hopeful abandonment to the 'most clement and holy goodness and justice' of the creator and to the awareness of divine omnipresence in creation.⁴⁷ Erasmus had similarly expressed himself in the *Concio*, individuating in the sinking into the abyss of divine mercy the only means to heal the corruption derived from original sin.⁴⁸

Neither Erasmus nor Bibliander, however, believed that original sin had totally perverted human nature. This theme was addressed in *De summo bono, et hominis felicitate summaque perfectione sive de perfecta restitutione generis humani per dei filium incarnatum*, a voluminous unpublished work (unknown date of composition).⁴⁹ Herein, free will was considered an element 'naturally' present in human nature, since it was God's will that mankind reach 'goodness and salvation'. The existence of free will is certified through a scrupulous doctrinal and philological discussion of theological texts (primarily Augustine) and biblical passages. In the *Christianae disciplinae liber primus*, also written at an unknown date and never published, Bibliander embarked on a lofty panegyric of man and his divine nature, grounded in the free will accorded to him by God.⁵⁰

Bibliander wrote to Myconius that sinning was a free act through which man chose to deviate from the 'righteous will' given to him by the Father, and therefore its consequences fell on him alone.⁵¹ Possibly to give more weight to his arguments (bearing in mind, however, that the composition

⁴⁶ Bibliander, *De summo bono*.

⁴⁷ Hottinger, *Historiae ecclesiasticae* 699 f.

⁴⁸ Erasmus of Rotterdam, *A Sermon* 98 (LB V 586C).

⁴⁹ Some passages are published in Segesvary V., *L'Islam et la Réforme. Études sur l'attitude des réformateurs zurichois envers l'Islam 1510-1550* (San Francisco-London: 1998, I ed. 1978) 237. Erasmus of Rotterdam, *A Sermon* 92; 102 ff. (LB V 565C, 570D ff.) and *A Discussion of Free Will, Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto-Buffalo-London: 1999-2000) 76-77.

⁵⁰ The text is at Zurich Zentralbibliothek, Ms. Car. I 93; sheets are not numbered. The thesis was demonstrated herein with recourse to biblical, philosophical, and wisdom texts.

⁵¹ Hottinger, *Historiae ecclesiasticae* 700 f.: 'Ex verbis Dei aestimo facta hominum et voluntates partim bonas, partim malas [...] iam ex instituto Dei optimi, sapientissimi, aequissimi, liberalissimi, ex bonis causis, boni affectus consequuntur, ex malis mali [...] Non tamen statuo merita velut nostrarum virium, non beneficia Dei minuo vel obscuro, non erigo mentem in arrogantiam, gloriationem, iactationem'.

date is not known), he also dedicated to this question the whole of the *Expositio precationis Nehemiae* [...] *in qua exponuntur causae bonorum et malorum operum, quae homines agunt, itemque bonorum et malorum, quae homines patiuntur, et quae illis obveniunt tam in hoc seculo quam in futuro*.⁵² The concepts of the innocence of the Father and of human responsibility were therein expressed with great biblical and speculative lucidity, always retaining at the core a positive conception of mankind and of God.

In this text, as in Erasmus's⁵³, Christ was given a central role in the 'correction' of the inclination toward evil. Christ was the fulcrum of Bibliander's theology because he was 'the highest and maximum good' to man, the only 'saviour and dispenser of salvation to all humanity', the culmination of God's design of salvation by way of the purity and immortality he had given man.⁵⁴ Faith in the Messiah represented for Bibliander the only means to the path of election, regeneration, and salvation: 'divine election rests with the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, and not without Christ, or outside of Christ, or before or after Christ'.⁵⁵ Faith, born out of grace, pushed man to imitate Him, thus becoming 'new creature' in the image of God.⁵⁶

Bibliander saw faith as boundless. He believed that the benefits of the cross extended to the whole of humanity, without spatial or temporal limitation, and that the Gospel offered to each man the grace of God, the remission of sins, justice, salvation, and eternal life.⁵⁷ Similarly to other sixteenth-century universalists (with the sole exception of Jean Bodin), Bibliander never crossed the borders of the *Respublica Christiana*. Even in *De summo bono*, which sketched through a rich array of testimonies (from the Sibyls to the Bible, Church Fathers, and Reformation theologians) the vision of a 'holy and catholic church of God', including men of all faiths, places, and times, the requisite for participation was individuated in the

⁵² Idem, *Schola Tigurinorum* 48; 72. The work is in Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, Ms. Car. I, fols. 92r; 270r–271v.

⁵³ Already present in the *Enchiridion militis Christiani*, this concept is also developed in the *Concio* and in the first part of *De libero arbitrio*.

⁵⁴ Bibliander, *De summo bono*.

⁵⁵ Bibliander, *De summo bono*.

⁵⁶ Bibliander, *De summo bono*: 'Vult enim Deus appellari et haberi Pater omnium: igitur vult, ut certo sciamus, nos omnes loco filiorum esse [...] inprimis in filio suo unigenito et charissimo Christo Iesu nobis praebeuit exemplum, ut vestigiis ipsius insistamus, et quotidie Spiritu et gratia Dei adiuti renovemur ad istam perfectissimam Dei patris imaginem, ut aliquando ipsius ope fiamus revera novus homo et nova creatura'.

⁵⁷ Bibliander, *De summo bono*.

'spiritual and sacramental fruition' of the body of Christ through the Gospel. That said, his conception of Christianity as a religion accessible in its basic principles to all peoples of the earth considerably widened the horizons of the *regnum Dei*.

In mapping the divine kingdom on earth, Bibliander paid particular attention to Islam, in his time the greatest threat to the Christian West.⁵⁸ His most important initiative, publishing the Koran in Latin and an 'encyclopaedia' on Muslim civilization, was motivated by the necessity to individuate a way to convert Islam through mutual religious knowledge and the rejection of 'holy war'.⁵⁹ Bibliander did not think within a framework of parity: his missionary goal was to be realistically attained through the translation of texts, but also through the spread of the Gospel. His opinion on Islam remained negative (he considered it the worst of heresies). This notwithstanding, his basic thesis was that 'knowledge was the best weapon' and that it must concern itself with all cultures in order to fully comprehend the divine providential design. His cognitive attitude toward the 'other', his refusal to demonize him, and his drive to legitimize the historical and religious values of different experiences led to a considerable advance in the development of modern thought.⁶⁰

This missionary and cultural goal was pursued in *Ad nominis Christiani socios consultatio quam ratione Turcarum potentia repellere possit* (1542), where he rejected the use of violent means to fight the Turks, following the argument that God could transform into good Christians 'Turks, Saracens, Tartars, Jews, as He had once created Abraham's sons out of stones', and make them members of the divine, indivisible, and universal community

⁵⁸ On his work as an Islamist, see Segesvary V., *L'Islam et la Réforme*, chap. VII; Bobzin H., *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation. Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Arabistik und Islamkunde in Europa* (Beirut: 1995), chap. III; Christ G., "Theodor Biblianders Türken-schrift. Ein Reformator und Humanist über Religion, Moral und kriegerischen Erfolg", in Christ-von Wedel-Leu (eds.), *Erasmus in Zürich* 309–326; Felici L., "L'Islam in Europa. L'edizione del Corano di Theodor Bibliander (1543)", *Cromohs* 11 (2006) 1–12; eadem, *Profezie di riforma e idee di concordia religiosa. Visioni e speranze dell'esule piemontese Giovanni Leonardo Sartori* (Florence: 2009), chap. III (with bibliography). Interesting observations also in Pollet J.V., *Martin Bucer. Etudes sur la correspondance avec de nombreux textes inédits* (Paris: 1962), vol. II, 314ff.

⁵⁹ Bibliander Theodor, *Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vita, ac doctrina, ipseque Alcoran* (Basel, Joannes Oporinus: 1543, 1550), *Apologia*, fols. 3r ff. For the French edition of the *Apologia*, see Lamarque H. (ed.), *Le Coran à la Renaissance: playdoyer pour une traduction*, Introduction (Toulouse: 2007).

⁶⁰ Segesvary, *L'Islam et la Réforme* 175.

where the 'seed of religion and wisdom' – that is, love toward God and the moral principles present in each man – could flourish.⁶¹

Bibliander's perspective also encompassed the Jews and the great multitude of oriental peoples. With the intent of including them in the *ecclesia Dei* and of healing confessional fractures detrimental to both society and the conscience of Christians, Bibliander devoted himself to seeking a common religious and cultural base. Particularly important in this connection was the extraordinary work *De ratione communi omnium linguarum et literarum commentarius*, the complete title of which significantly reads: *Cui adnexa est compendiarie explicatio doctrinae rectae beateque vivendi, et religionis omnium gentium atque populorum, quam argumentum hoc postulare videbatur*. The connection between the quest for linguistic unification and universal concord is, in this text, apparent.⁶² Considering the intrinsic connection between language and religion – Christ is, after all, God's *logos* – Bibliander identified, through a comparative analysis of classical languages and Arabic and an analysis of the common principles of the three monotheistic faiths, a common original language. Such shared elements were numbered around ten and concerned mainly the immortality of the soul, the spiritual essence of man and religion, and the existence of a single, omniscient, omnipotent, eternal godhead that created, governed, and judged the universe, guided human society through his inspired intermediaries, and acted as an object of spiritual cult and as a normative principle in public and private life. These philosophical and spiritual ideas were not exclusive to one people but belonged to all humanity, even if they were differently expressed. Their reception and practice gave access to the universal 'community of saints' regardless of faith, culture, or social or professional condition. The work also delineates the political contours of such a community, advancing the idea of a supreme sovereign, emissary of God, endowed with the fullness of temporal and spiritual powers.

Bibliander further expounded upon the features of this monarchy in a series of writings dating back to 1553, in particular *De fatis monarchiae*

⁶¹ The *Consultatio* was published in Basel by Nicolaus Bryllinger in 1542: see fol. 63v. The subtitle of the work reads: *Reperies hic quoque lector, de rationibus, quibus solida certaue concordia et pax in ecclesia et republica Christiana constitui possit, deque ortu et incrementis imperii Turcici, item de superstitione Mahumetana, et aliis quibusdam rebus lectu et cogitatu plane dignissimis*.

⁶² Published in Zurich by Christoph Froschauer in 1548, and recently by H.-M. Kirn and I. Backus (Geneva: 2011). See Segesvary, *L'Islam et la Réforme* 245 ff.; Egli, *Theodor Bibliander* 80 ff.; Borst A., *Der Turmbau von Babel. Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker* (Stuttgart: 1960), vol. III, 1084 ff.; 1171; 1196.

Romanae somnium vaticinum Esdrae prophetae and *De monarchia totius orbis suprema, legitima, et sempiterna quod regnum est et sacerdotium Messiae filii Davidis secundum carnem, filii autem dei vivi aeterna generatione*, which was a preface to the *Vaticinia domini Jesu Christi, patriarcharum, prophetarum, apostolorum, Christianae ecclesiae doctorum, Judaeorum, Mahumedicorum et Gentilium*.⁶³ The idea of a ‘unum ovile et unus pastor’ – that is, a sovereign capable of universal reconciliation – was widespread in the first half of the sixteenth century because of the deep uncertainties linked to wars, religious conflict, and the crisis of the Church and of the Empire.⁶⁴ Albeit unaffected by charismatic temptations (contrary, for instance, to his friend Postel),⁶⁵ Bibliander was not alien to a climate of fervent expectations.

In *De monarchia* he announced, on the basis of biblical prophecies, the imminent advent of the ‘supreme, legitimate and eternal’ monarchy of the Messiah and the coming of a kingdom of justice and peace. His addressees were multiple, including all Christians, Jews, Muslims, princes, ecclesiastics, and theologians of Europe, Africa, Asia, and kingdoms and

⁶³ The *Vaticinia*, the complete title of which is *Quae Theodorus Bibliander non privata coniectatione, sed demonstratione historica et theologica illustravit et universis Christianis, Mahumedicis atque Iudaeis obtulit studio provehendi notitiam et gloriam Dei, et ad pacem atque salutem omnium gentium et populorum*, also contained the work *Vaticinia de suprema legitima et sempiterna monarchia Iesu Christi filii Dei et Mariae virginiae stirpe Davidica, deque hostibus Christi, praesertim vero de Pseudochristo*. Both *De monarchia* and *Vaticinia* are unpublished manuscripts in the Zentralbibliothek (Zurich), Ms. Car. I 92 e 93 (sheets partially not numbered). The *Vaticinia de Gog et Magog sive Antichristo et Pseudochristo* do not appear to be part of the same work. They are collected in *ibid.* (immediately following but indicated separately) in the table of contents. On these works, see Egli, *Theodor Bibliander* 90 ff.

⁶⁴ Important studies on prophecy in the sixteenth century are Reeves M., *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Age: A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford: 1969); *idem* (ed.), *Prophetic Rome in the High Renaissance Period* (Oxford: 1992); Vasoli C., *Profezia e ragione. Studi sulla cultura del Cinquecento e del Seicento* (Naples: 1979); Williams H. (ed.), *Prophecy and Millenarism: Essays in Honour of Marjorie Reeves* (Hallow: 1980); Niccoli O., *Profeti e popolo nell'Italia del Rinascimento* (Bari: 1982); Barnes R.B., *Prophecy and Gnosis. Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford: 1988); Zarri G., *Le 'sante vive'. Profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra '400 e '500* (Turin: 1990); McGinn B., *The Growth of Mysticism. A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: 1994); Felici, *Profezie di riforma*.

⁶⁵ On the French visionary and scholar who had indicated the King of France as universal sovereign, see Bouwsma W.J., *Concordia mundi. The career and thought of Guillaume Postel (1510–1581)* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1957); Kuntz M.L., *Guillaume Postel Prophet of the Restoration of All Things. His Life and Thought* (The Hague: 1981); Scuccimarra, *I confini del mondo* 253 ff. On his relationship with Bibliander, see Rotondò A., “Guillaume Postel e Basilea”, now in *idem*, *Studi di storia ereticale del Cinquecento*, 2 vols. (Florence: 2008), vol. II, 443–476.

cities 'all over the globe'; the motivation of his choice is familiar, and it revolves around the universality of grace and the basic religious unity of the human race in light of the shared laws of nature.⁶⁶ Here, too, the refusal of predestination doctrine is categorical.⁶⁷ However, this work is also notable for a new civic and political tension and a heightened awareness of the problem of religious conflict within Christianity and with the Ottoman Empire, as well as for an ardent desire to find a solution to this situation (most likely a result of Bibliander's experiences as a theologian and as a 'faithful citizen' of the Holy Roman Empire).⁶⁸ Bibliander urged his audience to exert maximum efforts to heal the religious fracture, thus obliterating its tragic spiritual, political, and social consequences, and to operate through peaceful means in view of the 'great consensus' among religions on the fundamental principles of salvation.⁶⁹ He tried to demonstrate the concordance among the three faiths concerning the essential attributes of Christ, who therefore appeared as the legitimate common 'monarch'.⁷⁰ The coming of the Messiah was seen as imminent with the realization of the apocalyptic prophecy, the return of Gog and Magog, the defeat of the Antichrist, the conversion of all humanity to Christ, and the beginning of Christ's reign as foretold by Isaiah.⁷¹ In *De Monarchia* it was seen as the union of large and opulent states predicted by Babylonian, Egyptian, Persian and Roman oracles.⁷²

In 1553 two more works helped spread Bibliander's beliefs, the *De fatis* and the *De legitima vindicatione Christianismi veri et sempiterni*; in both, the work of evangelization was entrusted to the Holy Roman Emperor and

⁶⁶ Bibliander, *De monarchia* fols. 1v–2v: God did not have 'respectum personarum, sed in quavis gente quicumque timet deum, ac operatur iustitiam gratum illi et acceptum esse'; he had created 'omnes homines [...] ad optimam atque perfectissimam ipsius opificis dei et parentis imaginem'. All mankind was destined 'ad unum finem bonorum [...] ex aeterno suae benevolentiae consilio ut deum parentem et universitatis gubernatorem sapientissimum, benevolum, iustum, cunctis providentem' by an extraordinarily generous God, who offered 'ex immenso thesauro bonitatis suae', 'universis et singulis offert atque pollicetur suam beneficentiam'. As creator and governor of the universe, God have inscribed in the humans the 'leges bene beateque vivendi, et regulas [...] quae subinde illos extiment ad gerendum ea, quae honesta, et deo placita, et ipsis salutaria sunt'.

⁶⁷ Bibliander, *De monarchia* fol. 2v. He claimed that supporters of predestination were 'barbarous and ferocious', full of 'utmost impudence and wickedness' because of their will to substitute themselves for divine judgement.

⁶⁸ Bibliander, *De monarchia* fol. 14r.

⁶⁹ Bibliander, *De monarchia* fols. 6v; 12r–v; 15v.

⁷⁰ Bibliander, *De monarchia* fols. 3v; 4v ff.; 6v; 7v ff.

⁷¹ Bibliander, *De monarchia* fols. 7v ff.; 16r.

⁷² Bibliander, *De monarchia* fol. 2r.

to the English King Edward VI. Another work composed ten years later, titled *De conversione Iudaeorum ad Christum*, remained in manuscript form.⁷³ The project of a translation of the Bible into Arabic was also left at a preliminary stage; after the Latin edition of the Koran, it embodied Bibliander's belief in a dialogue between the Christian West and other world civilizations with a view toward world peace. Bibliander pursued this goal until his last work, a historically founded exposition of Christian truth based on an analysis of two sermons of Luka on evangelical history from antiquity to its most recent representatives.⁷⁴ After illustrating his key ideas in terms of *loci* – the universality of both free will and the evangelical promise etc. – Bibliander sketched a project of reform of the church, significantly supplied with an appendix on the rites of Christians in Asia and Africa. Only in this chorus, in this plurality of voices, could Erasmus's ideas on the renewal of Christian society and on a peaceful spread of the evangelical message come to full realization.

⁷³ The *De legitima vindicatione* was published in Basel. On these works, see Egli, *Theodor Bibliander* 94ff. The manuscript of *De conversione* is in Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, Ms. Car. I 89 (sheets not numbered).

⁷⁴ Bibliander, *De legitima vindicatione* 127 ff.

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'BETWIXT HEAVEN AND HELL':
RELIGIOUS TOLERATION AND THE RECEPTION OF ERASMUS
IN RESTORATION ENGLAND

Gregory D. Dodds

In 1680 Roger L'Estrange wrote that along 'with Erasmus himself, he is crush'd betwixt the Two Extremes'.¹ Nine years later he again associated himself with Erasmus and wrote that he was being 'crush'd betwixt the Two Extremes, as they hung up *Erasmus himself*, betwixt Heaven and Hell'.² Feeling attacked from all sides, L'Estrange found comfort and a polemical defense for his own writings in personally identifying himself with Erasmus. The point for L'Estrange, the official press censor and indefatigable royal propagandist for Charles II, was that his adversaries were dangerous extremists.³ During the panic generated by the Popish Plot, L'Estrange consistently maintained that he was not a papist and was simply a loyal supporter of the king and the established church. He was forced nevertheless to flee England in 1680 after notoriously publishing a scathing denunciation of Titus Oates and others whom he quite accurately accused of concocting the fiction of the Popish Plot.⁴ Zealous Protestants portrayed him as a secret Catholic sympathizer for publically doubting the Catholic conspiracy to assassinate Charles II and place his Catholic brother James on the throne. He feared that his life was in danger both from the London mob and, more dangerously, plans for his arrest that were afoot in the House of Commons.⁵ It was at this moment that he published a new translation of Erasmus's *Colloquies*, and sought to present himself as a moderate Erasmian caught between two extremes. The

¹ L'Estrange Roger, "To the Reader", in Erasmus Desiderius, *Select Colloquies* (London, Thomas Newcomb: 1680) fol. A3r.

² L'Estrange Roger, "To the Reader", in Erasmus Desiderius, *Twenty-two Select Colloquies* (London, R. Bentley and R. Sare: 1689) fol. A3r.

³ L'Estrange was not particularly successful in his attempts to suppress printed materials that could threaten the peace of church and state. See Uglow J., *A Gambling Man: Charles II and the Restoration* (London: 2009) 189–190.

⁴ See Goldie M., "Roger L'Estrange's *Observer* and the Exorcism of the Plot", in Dunan-Page A. – Lynch B. (eds.), *Roger L'Estrange and the Making of Restoration Culture* (Aldershot: 2008) 76–78.

⁵ Goldie, "L'Estrange's *Observer*" 72–73.

mention of Erasmus thus reflected L'Estrange's dedication to what he saw as Erasmus's principles and served as another attempt to highlight the extreme and dangerous zeal of his adversaries.

Despite his attempts to don the mantle of Erasmus, L'Estrange was well known in England as a caustic polemicist and staunch opponent of religious toleration. In fact, however, L'Estrange's intolerance was directly linked with his identification with Erasmus. He was also not alone in seeing the congruity between the Erasmian legacy and religious intolerance. Edward Stillingfleet, the influential and respected Restoration scholar, preacher and polemicist opposed religious toleration while depicting Erasmus as the founding inspiration for the church of England. Stillingfleet and L'Estrange consistently supported a religious worldview where peace and unity in the church precluded dissenting religious factions.⁶ They feared that a fractured church would inevitably lead to religious violence and social chaos. Like Erasmus, they sought a comprehensive established church. However, L'Estrange and Stillingfleet also differed with each other on the nature of that established church. Where L'Estrange argued that all dissenters needed to conform their views and practices to the moderate established church, Stillingfleet sought dogmatic flexibility and a church that was internally tolerant. Despite their differences, which will be examined further below, they both thought they recognized a kindred spirit in Erasmus. Whether they were directly influenced by Erasmian texts or whether they simply felt the name of Erasmus lent greater credence to their own writings, they regularly chose to quote, cite and translate Erasmus's words. Stillingfleet, in particular, drew from Erasmus's writings on the centrality of *pax et concordia* as the essential core of a non-dogmatic latitudinarian Church of England.⁷ Erasmus's texts and legacy were useful for precisely the same debates that had concerned Erasmus so much: the struggle over Christian unity and disunity, peace and violence, tolerance

⁶ In seeking a post-civil war Church of England that would be built on peace and restored unity, English latitudinarians echoed Erasmus's famous words to Bishop Jean de Carondelet, 'The sum and substance of our religion is peace and concord. This can hardly remain the case unless we define as few matters as possible and leave each individual's judgment free on many questions. This is because the obscurity of most questions is great and the malady is for the most part intrinsic to our human nature: we do not know how to yield once a question has been made a subject of contention. And after the debate has warmed up each one thinks that the side he has undertaken rashly to defend is absolute truth'. See Erasmus to Jean de Carondelet, in Olin J.C., *Six Essays on Erasmus and a Translation of Erasmus' Letter to Carondelet: The Preface to His Edition of St. Hilary, 1523* (New York: 1979) 100–101.

⁷ Stillingfleet Edward, *The mischief of separation* (London, Henry Mortlock: 1680) 1.

and intolerance. What is perhaps surprising is not that Erasmus's name remained connected to these debates, but that, ultimately, the greatest extollers of Erasmus in Restoration England also supported religious intolerance.

It is easy to assume that those arguing for intolerance did so from a position of dogmatic bigotry. When we look, however, at writers such as Stillingfleet and L'Estrange we do not find arguments based on doctrinal purity and the supposed heresy of the unorthodox. Rather, they feared the sectarian dogmatism of dissenters and were genuinely interested in maintaining a unified Christian church that was flexible enough to maintain peace and unity within that church.⁸ L'Estrange wanted that flexibility to exist within the conforming person while Stillingfleet wanted a single unified church that was flexible enough to contain some variety of belief and practice. An examination of the connections to Erasmus that emerged within the debates over religious toleration in the 1670s and 1680s brings greater insight into the arguments against expanding religious toleration in England. Such a study, however, also raises important questions about the nature of influence and the reception of an earlier, in this case much earlier, writer's thoughts. In this chapter I will examine three interconnected threads: the difficulties studying the reception and influence of Erasmus; the juxtaposition of Erasmian toleration with the push for sectarian toleration in Restoration England; and, as evidence for both of these issues, an examination of Roger L'Estrange and Edward Stillingfleet's use of Erasmus to further their religious visions for English society.⁹

Understanding the reception and long-term influence of Erasmus remains a complex undertaking. The confessional divisions, hatreds, and violence caused by the ideological rifts of the sixteenth century resulted in the fragmentation of the Erasmian legacy; very few later thinkers and writers would position themselves, unambiguously, as Erasmians. Instead, some looked to Erasmus for inspiration in Biblical scholarship, some built on his soteriological thought, and others echoed his devotion to moderation and peace. It is certainly possible that an author read another's works, was inspired by them, and then chose to draw attention to those

⁸ Alexandra Walsham has pointed out that we cannot simply draw clear distinctions between persecutors and those who argued for tolerance. There were, in fact, many ways to define tolerance. See Walsham A., *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500–1700* (Manchester: 2006).

⁹ English latitudinarians also were anti-Calvinist in their free-will theology and espousal of a religious *via media*. See Tyacke N., *Aspects of English Protestantism* (Manchester: 2001) 320–336.

works through citation, translation, or imitation. It is even more likely, however, that the texts of a previous author lent support, justification, authority, or importance to the arguments of a later writer. It was often the case that Erasmus's name and references to his texts appeared in sixteenth and seventeenth century texts when authors were seeking additional authoritative support for their arguments. In many cases, those arguments had little to do with the worldview or thought of Erasmus, but instead reflected the preoccupations and struggles of a later era.¹⁰ Only rarely did an author suggest that a line of original thinking had begun with Erasmus and that they were noting it because they learned it from him. As a result, ascertaining whether there was direct Erasmian influence or whether authors simply found congruity between his words and their own purposes is usually beyond what the evidence can delineate.

One of the most important strands of Erasmus's extended historical reception took place in England. The prevalence of his writings in England, both in Latin and in English translation, and the routine references to those texts in English publications leaves little doubt that he remained a respected voice. While the large number of printed editions of his works in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at the very least implies a broad influence, the deepening confessional divide among Christians and the rapidly evolving nature of English political and religious society suggests that any substantial or direct influence can only be cautiously asserted. A dramatically altered historical context makes any uncomplicated assumptions of intellectual congruence or similarity impossible. There are two reasons, nonetheless, why examining the long-term influence and legacy of Erasmus in England is important, even as far removed from Erasmus as L'Estrange and Stillingfleet were in the late seventeenth century. First, the focused study of the intellectual antecedents for a particular thinker helps illuminate our understanding of that writer. While the particular level of influence remains indeterminate, we can discover greater clarity about the motivations, thought, and cultural worldview of those citing an individual like Erasmus. Influence studies also, despite their flaws, often help us examine larger time scales and broader historical trends. In the case of Erasmus, his thought did inaugurate particular ways of writing, thinking, and living that can then be traced through subsequent generations

¹⁰ Sometimes editors and translators of Erasmus's works in England went so far as to doctrinally correct and protestantize his thought. See Dodds G.D., *Exploiting Erasmus: The Erasmian Legacy and Religious Change in Early Modern England* (Toronto: 2009) 126–140.

of intellectual thinkers.¹¹ This is not surprising given the centrality and importance of his writings in the early sixteenth century as the church faced the most significant threat to its authority in a millennium. As a result, his thought would echo through numerous intellectual, social, and cultural movements that emerged from the disintegration of Christian unity. Thus, though any direct influence must remain somewhat speculative, the Erasmian context helps reveal some of the larger, and perhaps less obvious, cultural transformations taking place at the end of the seventeenth century. In many ways, as I will explain, L'Estrange and Stillingfleet represent the end of a particular ecclesiological vision for which Erasmus was the leading spokesman during the early decades of the European Reformations.

Christian moderation and greater toleration were central to Erasmus's vision for a Christian society. Erasmus made it clear that a coerced faith was not a real faith and that true Christianity was established by persuasion, not the assertion of power.¹² It therefore makes intuitive sense to see Erasmus as the forerunner of John Locke and the nascent Whig tradition in the late seventeenth century and this is indeed where Peter Bietenholz locates the Erasmian tradition.¹³ There is plenty of justification for such a view. Erasmus's sense of moderation, calm scholarship, and desire for rational Christianity to replace dogmatic violence and hatreds certainly appears to presage Locke's and appeal for reasonable Christianity, government by the people, and expanded religious toleration.¹⁴ Erasmus is often presented as a pioneering voice in a story of religious tolerance that runs through Locke and the Glorious Revolution to the development of western pluralism and multiculturalism. According to Bietenholz, this is the radical tradition that Erasmus helped inspire. As a 'champion of toleration'

¹¹ See McConica J., *English Humanists and Reformation Politics under Henry VIII and Edward VI* (Oxford: 1965); Thompson C.R., "Erasmus and Tudor England", in *Extrait de Actes du Congres Erasme, Rotterdam 27-29 Octobre 1969* (Amsterdam: 1971) 29-68; and Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus*.

¹² See Pabel H., "The Peaceful People of Christ", in Pabel H. (ed.), *Erasmus' Vision of the Church* (Kirksville, Missouri: 1995) 76. For Stillingfleet's similar appeal to persuasion see Griffin M., *Latitudinarianism in the Seventeenth-Century Church of England* (Leiden: 1992) 72-78.

¹³ Bietenholz P., *Encounters with a Radical Erasmus* (Toronto: 2008) 178-183.

¹⁴ John Locke argued that it was toleration, not persecution, that created a peaceful nation and secured the throne of a prince. See Marshall J., "Defining and redefining heresy up to Locke's *Letters*", in Loewenstein D. - Marshall J. (eds.), *Heresy, Literature and Politics in Early Modern English Culture* (Cambridge: 2006) 271. For Locke's views on toleration, see Woolhouse R., *Locke: A Biography* (Cambridge: 2009) 285-290.

and a major influence on Locke, Erasmus can thus be seen as part of a dissenting, liberal tradition that challenged authority and laid the foundation for western democracy and religious freedom.¹⁵ Johan Huizinga was perhaps the most effusive in his praise for Erasmus when he wrote that 'in all these ideas and convictions Erasmus really heralds a later age. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries those thoughts remained an undercurrent: in the eighteenth century Erasmus's message of deliverance bore fruit. In this respect he has most certainly been a precursor and preparer of the modern mind: of Rousseau, Herder, Pestalozzi and of the English and American thinkers'.¹⁶ More recently, Simon Markish wrote that Erasmus's tolerance 'was a necessary initial step toward true toleration; as he did in many other things, Erasmus took the first steps along this new path, the end of which we have not reached even today'.¹⁷ Perhaps the most perceptive analysis of Erasmus's connection with later Enlightenment thought is in Ricardo Quinones's dualist study of Erasmus and Voltaire.¹⁸ With hindsight and the view that history has led from less freedom and democracy to greater, Erasmus can be idealized as a prophetic voice for the modern West. My purpose here is not to counter these readings of Erasmus. This is indeed a part of his legacy and there is no question that the legacy of Erasmus in the Enlightenment was significant.¹⁹ I am suggesting, however, that there is another story that complicates these appraisals of a proto-modern Erasmus.

While there was a connection between Erasmus, Locke, and religious toleration, there was also Erasmian support for the intolerance of Roger L'Estrange and Edward Stillingfleet, though Stillingfleet would later come to support some of Locke's post-1688 views on toleration. This connection has an important bearing not only on our understanding of late-seventeenth century English politics and religion, but also for how we view the development of religious pluralism more generally. There are, in fact, several studies that highlight the limited nature of Erasmus's concept of religious toleration. In his 1931 essay on Erasmus's attitude toward toleration, Wallace Ferguson faulted Erasmus for not having developed

¹⁵ Bietenholz, *Radical Erasmus* 39–108.

¹⁶ Huizinga J., *Erasmus and the Age of Reformation* (London: 1952) 192.

¹⁷ Markish S.P., *Erasmus and the Jews* (Chicago: 1986) 143. Also see Quinones R.J., *Erasmus and Voltaire: Why They Still Matter* (Toronto: 2010).

¹⁸ Quinones, *Erasmus and Voltaire*.

¹⁹ Erasmus's influence on Enlightenment figures has also been insightfully reviewed in Mansfield B., *Phoenix of His Age: Interpretations of Erasmus c 1550–1750* (Toronto: 1979) 155–258.

a concept of legal toleration.²⁰ Heiko Oberman, meanwhile noted the 'surprising intolerance of Erasmus' regarding Jews.²¹ Here, Oberman believed, Erasmus was unreasonable.²² Other critics have pointed out Erasmus's lack of any systematic thought on toleration, his devotion to rule by a Christian prince, his lack of assertiveness for the political changes necessary for real toleration, and his overriding cautiousness.²³ As James Tracy has pointed out, however, these critiques often fail to acknowledge the specific contexts within which Erasmus functioned.²⁴

More recently, several studies have examined the relationship between Erasmus's theological thought and the development of religious toleration. Bruce Mansfield, Gary Remer, and James Tracy have provided excellent analyses of the central function of toleration in the religious world Erasmus envisioned. Erasmus's overriding preoccupation was the Christian necessity of peace and concord. Rather than toleration being the grudging acceptance of a different opinion because it cannot easily be eradicated, Erasmus believed that tolerance was perhaps most important for the person with the power to be intolerant. To choose to persecute was a choice against Christ. Of course, persecution also harmed the persecuted – possibly for eternity. As Gary Remer paraphrased Erasmus, 'A heretic may be converted, a dead person is never converted'.²⁵ A core idea for Erasmus was the unity of the body of Christ. Such unity could only be achieved, he believed, if broad latitude was allowed in areas of *adiaphora* – non-essentials. The essentials were few, among them the doctrines of peace and concord, which were the 'sum and substance of our religion'.²⁶ For Erasmus, toleration was both a doctrinal imperative and a practice of lived piety. All of this has been pointed out numerous times, but often without the recognition for how cautious and traditional Erasmus

²⁰ Ferguson W.K., "The Attitude of Erasmus Toward Toleration", in *Persecution and Liberty. Essays in honor of George Lincoln Burr* (New York: 1931) 176.

²¹ Oberman H., *The impact of the Reformation: essays* (Grand Rapids, MI: 1994) 102–106.

²² Oberman H., "The travail of tolerance: containing chaos in early modern Europe", in Grell O.P. – Scribner B. (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformations* (Cambridge: 1996) 26.

²³ In one of the earliest critiques of Erasmus's toleration Robert Murray argued that Erasmus lacked an understanding of 'progress,' while Luther's works unwittingly paved the way for modern progress and religious toleration. See Murray R.H., *Erasmus and Luther: Their Attitude to Toleration* (New York: 1920).

²⁴ Tracy J.D., "Erasmus, Coornhert and the Acceptance of Religious Disunity in the Body Politic: A Low Countries Tradition?" in Berkvens-Stevelinck C. – Israel J. – Posthumus Meyjes G.H.M. (eds.), *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden: 1997) 51.

²⁵ Remer G., *Humanism and the Rhetoric of Toleration* (University Park, PA: 1996) 81.

²⁶ Letter to Jean de Carondelet, bishop of Palermo, quoted in Olin, *Six Essays* 100.

was in his methods for reform and his vision for the Christian ideal. He was trying to save Christendom from the deconstructive pursuit of doctrinal purity. Erasmus, however, did not conceive of toleration in the sense normally associated with that word. Mario Turchetti has pointed out that it is more accurate to see Erasmus working for *concordia*, a term he regularly employed, rather than the term *tolerantia*.²⁷ When we read '*tolerantia*' we almost subconsciously think of religious pluralism. What Erasmus sought, however, was a method for maintaining unity in spite of the vagaries inherent in the human condition. He was moving in the opposite direction, and with a contrary mentalité, to later understandings of toleration, pluralism and liberty.

Roger L'Estrange, on the opposite side of the political spectrum from the Whigs, was the staunchly belligerent opponent of emerging arguments for religious and political toleration. L'Estrange supported the established church of England and sought to retain and strengthen penalties for dissenters. In a sense, both Locke and L'Estrange were legitimately building on particular aspects of the Erasmian legacy. L'Estrange, however, was in some ways closer to the larger Christian worldview of Erasmus. Alternatively, L'Estrange's use of Erasmus was also a form of crass manipulation in the cause of royalist propaganda. There are two things that I want to stress about L'Estrange's appropriation of Erasmus. First, he got Erasmus wrong, which is not surprising given the fact that getting Erasmus right was not his motivation.²⁸ L'Estrange was not interested in the perfect reading of Erasmus, but rather in how the memory of Erasmus could be used to support the position he had staked out for himself and which he then declared was the moderate middle. The second point is that L'Estrange's reading of Erasmus was not an inaccurate interpretation of a central thread in Erasmus's thought.

L'Estrange was the official censor of the Restoration printing industry and became perhaps the foremost apologist for Charles II and the emerging

²⁷ Turchetti M., "Une question mal posée: Erasme et la Tolérance: L'idée de Sygkatabasis", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* (1991) 381.

²⁸ Both L'Estrange and Stillingfleet sidestepped Erasmus's appeals for all Christians to remain in communion with the Catholic Church. They adopted his calls for peace and unity around a central, established church, but for them the true catholic church was the English church. In their view, the English church had reformed the vices of Roman Catholicism while retaining the essential core of catholic worship, doctrine, and episcopal structure from the time before the onset of papal corruption. They were thus able to raise up Erasmus as a spokesman for true catholicism and a founder of the Church of England.

Tories.²⁹ In his view, he was defending the moderate middle from the forces of violence and extremism on both ends of the political and religious spectrum. Like Erasmus, he sought a comprehensive church that was devoted to peace and unity.³⁰ This church was best realized in the church of England, which represented, he believed, a tolerant and open middle space that rejected the dogmatism and threats of violence exhibited by zealous Catholics on the one side and Protestant extremists on the other. At the beginning of this chapter, I quoted L'Estrange equating his position in England to how Erasmus was similarly attacked from both sides. L'Estrange complained that the 'Fanatiques will have him to be a Favourer of the Plot, or (as all Episcopal men are accounted now a days) a Papist in Masquerade. The Author of the Compendium of the Late Tryals, takes him for a Fanatique: so that with Erasmus himself, he is crush'd betwixt the Two Extremes'.³¹ He wrote this in the introduction to his own translation of Erasmus's *Colloquies* – perhaps the best translations of the *Colloquies* into English until the twentieth century. They were also, given the three editions that were published, relatively popular with the English public. L'Estrange, however, never published anything without a polemical point and, after noting how people attacked him like they did Erasmus, wrote: 'Upon the sense of These Unkindnesses, he has now made English of These Colloquies, as an Apology on the One hand, and a Revenge on the Other'.³² His introduction made it clear that Erasmus represented an alternative to the belligerent Protestantism that characterized English political and social discourse. L'Estrange believed that his opponents were dogmatic and lacked both goodwill and humor. Erasmus was useful for this argument, not simply because he represented a moderate middle way, but because he brought humor where it was so desperately needed. L'Estrange hoped that an English version comprising twenty of Erasmus's *Colloquies* would 'turn some Part of the Rage and Bitterness that is now in Course, into Pity and Laughter'.³³ The publication and the

²⁹ See De Krey G.S., *Restoration and Revolution in Britain* (New York: 2007) 173–75.

³⁰ The connection between Erasmus's views on peace and his opposition to public dissent from the church is carefully examined in Pabel, "The Peaceful People of Christ" 57–94.

³¹ L'Estrange, "To the Reader", in Erasmus, *Twenty select colloquies* fol. A3v.

³² Ibidem fol. A3v.

³³ Ibidem fol. A3r. In another pamphlet L'Estrange referred to his translation of the *Colloquies* as evidence that his publications were meant to help England's troubles rather than inflame them. His enemies, however, did not understand the strength and 'Moral of a Satyr' and only recognized 'the Spite, and Venom of it'. See L'Estrange Roger, *A short ansver to a whole litter of libels* (London, Henry Brome: 1680) 14.

introduction made a statement about a particular worldview and about L'Estrange's self-fashioning of his own religious identity. He was overtly adopting the mantle of Erasmus, but in doing so he also may have been identifying with Erasmus's failure to win support for a peaceful, moderate, and unified church.

The connection between Erasmus and L'Estrange went deeper than a shared vilification from both sides of the religious spectrum. Substantively, L'Estrange was operating from the same religious worldview that Erasmus helped craft in the sixteenth century.³⁴ Like Erasmus, L'Estrange argued that the sum and substance of Christianity was peace and concord. Doctrine could be useful, but more often public disputation confused the common people, led to greater divisions, and threatened the security of the kingdom. Even worse, religious conflict was inimical with Christianity and essentially destroyed it. Ironically, L'Estrange did not see his own often caustic writings as a cause of religious conflict. In his Erasmian elevation of peace and unity to the greatest essentials of the Christian faith, he was deliberately condemning the doctrinal focus of dissenters, particularly Calvinist separatists. While he may have felt a personal devotion to Christian peace and charity, he also effectively commandeered those words for a concerted polemical attack on nonconformists. It was not religious dogmatism or bigotry, however, that motivated L'Estrange to oppose religious toleration. Contrary to the intolerant stereotype, he was not operating out of a determination to crush his theological adversaries. In fact, L'Estrange was fully convinced that nonconformists were the intolerant ones and, thus, potentially violent.³⁵ The problem was not tolerating these groups, but rather that tolerating the intolerant would lead to division and violence. L'Estrange asked the question that would be repeated in subsequent centuries: how can a tolerant society tolerate the intolerant?³⁶

In 1679, L'Estrange made his views on the religious toleration of dissenters clear in his polemic *Toleration discussed in two dialogues*. Modeled

³⁴ According to Ole Peter Grell, 'It is significant that most, if not all, of this period's writers on toleration, at least until the third decade of the seventeenth century, only argued for freedom of conscience and occasionally for some limited freedom of worship out of the conviction that this tolerance would eventually serve to establish true peace and concord'. See Grell O.P., "Introduction", in Grell O.P. – Scribner B. (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformations* (Cambridge: 1996) 6.

³⁵ L'Estrange Roger, *Toleration discuss'd, in two dialogues* (London, Henry Brome: 1679) 40–42. A previous edition was published in 1673.

³⁶ *Ibidem* 41.

on Erasmus's *Colloquies*, L'Estrange crafted a friendly conversation between two characters with differing perspectives on the church. Speaking in L'Estrange's text were a nonconformist and a conformist, with the conformist speaking for L'Estrange and, ultimately, defeating all the arguments of the nonconformist. The friendly nature of the dialogue, however, was also a key part of L'Estrange's argument. Dissenters were simply too angry, too full of zeal, and too self-righteous. Religious toleration frightened L'Estrange not because of false theology, but because of social disorder. Did toleration lead to peace, or did intolerance lead to peace? Which approach would lead to more religious violence? L'Estrange was convinced that tolerance was a recipe for violence. If there was religious toleration, L'Estrange asked:

What Security have We, that it shall not yet embroil us in *Mutiny*, and *Sedition*? Will not the *Tolerated Party* become a Sanctuary for all the *Turbulent Spirits* in the Nation? Shall they not have their *Meetings*, and *Consultations*, without Control?³⁷

The freedom to be as religiously bigoted as one chose, L'Estrange believed, was a recipe for renewing the religious wars. But there was another, even deeper issue for L'Estrange. Tolerance was a destruction of law.³⁸ The goal of the nonconformist ministers, he wrote, was to 'unsettle the Law,' under the 'Pretense of Popular Reformation'.³⁹ Religion might be the outward methodology, but the hidden aim was to challenge authority and seize political power.

We have commonly assumed that seventeenth century supporters of intolerance were theological dogmatists who demanded orthodoxy. But L'Estrange is an example that this was not always the case. L'Estrange feared people who were too religious. Paramount in his mind was how the divisions caused by the Reformation had ultimately led to religious violence and civil wars. Referring to the recent civil war in England, he reminded his readers that

It was the *Pulpit* that started the Quarrel; The *Pulpit* that Enflam'd it; The *Pulpit* that Christen'd it *God's Cause*; The *Pulpit* that conjur'd the People into a *Covenant* to defend it; The *Pulpit* that blasted the King, that pursu'd him, that prest the putting of Him to Death; and the *Pulpit* that applauded it when it was done. And how was all this effected? (I beseech ye) but by

³⁷ Ibidem 41.

³⁸ Ibidem 41.

³⁹ Ibidem 40.

Imposing upon the weak and inconsiderate Multitude, *Errors for Truths*; by perverting of *Scriptures*; and by These Arts, moulding the *Passions* and the *Consciences* of the People to the Interest of a Tumultuary Design. These are the Fruits of the *Toleration* you demand.⁴⁰

The pulpit was dangerous; religion was dangerous. For both L'Estrange and Erasmus, doctrinal differences should be kept out of the public sphere and should not be allowed to threaten what was significantly more important: peace, unity, and charity.⁴¹ In fact, schism was the greatest heresy.⁴² Men like L'Estrange, Stillingfleet, and even Charles II, were increasingly recognizing the need for less religious dogmatism in public policy, though from decidedly different perspectives. The multitude, meanwhile, as evidenced in the anti-Catholic hysteria of the Popish Plot, was as belligerently dogmatic as ever. That L'Estrange felt this way is not that surprising since he was himself forced to flee England for not being Protestant enough. While their understandings of what constituted the one true church certainly differed, neither Erasmus nor L'Estrange condoned separatists who demanded tolerance so they could practice their sectarian intolerance.

During the brief reign of James II, life became even more complicated for L'Estrange. His loyalty to the crown superseded any qualms about James's Catholicism, but what became increasingly problematic was James II's determination to bring religious freedom to England in order to create a space for the legal acceptance of English Catholics. Precisely how James envisioned this working is not entirely clear, but he seems to have sporadically envisioned an English society that fully tolerated both Catholics and Protestant separatist groups like the Quakers. After Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, however, English Protestants watched the persecutions of French Protestants with a growing fear that James would eventually do the same in England.⁴³ L'Estrange's dream of an established church of England that demanded public conformity for the sake of peace and concord was falling apart. Even worse was the sectarian Protestant

⁴⁰ Ibidem 12–13.

⁴¹ Erasmus felt strongly that divisive issues, even the critical soteriological debate over predestination and free will, should be kept out of the public sphere. Erasmus, *A Discussion of Free Will*, in CWE 76:14.

⁴² See Pabel, "The Peaceful People of Christ" 83.

⁴³ For the difficulties L'Estrange and Stillingfleet faced in dealing with the persecution of Huguenots and the arrival of Huguenots in England, whom in many ways resembled English dissenters, see Dunan-Page A., "Roger L'Estrange and the Huguenots: Continental Protestantism and the Church of England", in Dunan-Page A. – Lynch B. (eds.), *Roger L'Estrange and the Making of Restoration Culture* (Aldershot: 2008) 123–126.

toleration espoused by James II's Whig opponents. When L'Estrange, therefore, released a new edition of Erasmus's *Colloquies* in 1689 he altered the introduction in a few significant ways. No longer was he simply caught between two extremes, between Puritan fanatics and seditious Catholics, as he had written in the earlier edition. Now L'Estrange and his dream for Christianity were hung up between heaven and hell, in a no man's land, with no support from King nor populace. In an era of Reformation zeal the middle place had disappeared. He was being 'crush'd betwixt the Two Extremes as they hung up Erasmus himself, betwixt Heaven and Hell'.⁴⁴ Religious intolerance in England was never about doctrinal purity for L'Estrange, but about a particular vision of a moderate Christian community. The issue of religious toleration and how much diversity a Christian society could accept had always been a negotiated dichotomy between heavenly purity and hellish social chaos. L'Estrange had fought his entire life for a vision of the church and state that he believed was moderate, peaceful, orderly, united, and, in his own mind, tolerant.

Roger L'Estrange's condemnation of sectarian toleration was not inconsistent with his personal identification with Erasmus. Both were operating on the assumption that schism was the destruction of Christianity and that Christian peace and unity were more significant than doctrinal scruples. L'Estrange was certainly not alone in his fear that tolerating bigotry and zealous sectarianism was a pathway to an anti-Christian society that could once again descend into religious violence. He was also not the only one to employ an Erasmian worldview to combat the fragmentation of the Christian commonwealth. Like L'Estrange, Edward Stillingfleet also routinely mentioned Erasmus in his writings and there is a striking congruence in their thought, rhetorical style and theological disposition.

Stillingfleet was a prolific author and speaker who addressed both a scholarly and popular audience. Following the restoration of Charles II in 1660, Stillingfleet served as a royal chaplain, became dean of St. Paul's, and eventually was appointed Bishop of Worcester. He was later even talked about as a leading candidate for the archbishopric of Canterbury. Stillingfleet's popularity as a preacher in the first decade of the Restoration was unmatched. His nickname, 'The Beauty of Holiness,' jokingly alluded to his support for the established church and his boyish good looks and silver tongue in the pulpit. Samuel Pepys, the great diarist, went out of his way to hear Stillingfleet preach and reported that his sermons were

⁴⁴ L'Estrange, "To the reader", in Erasmus, *Twenty-two selected colloquies* fol. A3v.

'a most plain, honest, and good grave sermon in the most unconcerned and easy, yet substantial manner that ever I heard in my life'.⁴⁵ Stillingfleet's popularity was so high that the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London believed that Stillingfleet was 'the ablest young man to preach the Gospel since the Apostles'.⁴⁶ He was also an originator of the latitudinarian movement that sought less doctrinal specificity within a unified national church.⁴⁷ Similar to Erasmus, he advocated a broad usage of *adiaphora* in order to smooth over divisions within the church. He also initially sought to reconcile with dissenters in the 1660s.⁴⁸ Stillingfleet's attempts to find common ground, however, met with the same fate as those of Erasmus. His push for greater flexibility within the church ran counter to the most intrinsic suppositions of the dissenters about the nature of truth. They were opposed to the church not because it was intolerant, but because it tolerated false doctrine and 'papist' ceremonies. Stillingfleet often mentioned Erasmus and quoted from his works, revealing his esteem for the humanist in numerous positive comments. Erasmus was 'wise,' a 'learned critic,' had 'great judgment and learning,' and so on.⁴⁹ He even suggested at one point that Catholics could not claim Erasmus since they had declared his writings heretical – thus leaving Erasmus for the English to claim.⁵⁰ Stillingfleet was more than happy to rely on Erasmus's authority and thus perpetuate the English argument that the Church of England was maintaining true catholicism while Papal Catholicism had diverged from the truth. Erasmus's Catholicism was therefore Stillingfleet's Catholicism.

Both L'Estrange and Stillingfleet identified themselves and the entire Church of England with the reformation that Erasmus had begun. Stillingfleet, however, was even more specific than L'Estrange about the Erasmian underpinnings of the English church. English Protestants were wrong, he argued, when they believed that Luther, Zwingli, or Calvin were the

⁴⁵ Pepys S., *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (London: 1905) 311.

⁴⁶ Ibidem 311.

⁴⁷ Griffin M.I.J., *Latitudinarianism in the Seventeenth-Century Church of England* (Leiden: 1992) 23.

⁴⁸ Latitudinarian attempts to reach out to dissenters did not meet with L'Estrange's approval. According to L'Estrange, a latitude man had 'more charity for the transgressors of the law, than he has for the observers of it'. Quoted in Ibidem 173n7.

⁴⁹ Stillingfleet Edward, *A discourse concerning the idolatry practised in the Church of Rome* (London, Henry Mortlock: 1671) 243; and Stillingfleet Edward, *A discourse in vindication of the doctrine of the Trinity* (London, Henry Mortlock: 1697) 178, 225.

⁵⁰ Stillingfleet Edward, *A rational account of the grounds of Protestant religion* (London, Henry Mortlock: 1665) 609.

originators of the Reformation and the guiding influences for Protestantism in England. 'It was not Luther, or Zuinglius,' he wrote, 'that contributed so much to the Reformation, as Erasmus; especially among us in England'.⁵¹ He then proceeded to explain why Erasmus was the chief architect of a faith that avoided the sectarianism and rebelliousness of Luther and Calvin's reforms while reforming the abuses of Rome. 'Erasmus was the Man who awakened mens understandings' and who brought learning, wit, the Church Fathers, and biblical scholarship to the people.⁵² What Luther accomplished compared to Erasmus was trivial and it 'is a foolish thing to image that a quarrel between two Monks at Wittenberg should make such alteration in the state of Christendom'.⁵³ The true substance of the Reformation, according to Stillingfleet, began with the work of Erasmus. The Protestant Reformation gave birth, however, to two types of Reformation. There was a Reformation from below that was disorderly and dangerous and a Reformation from above that brought peace, unity, and a real restoration of Christian community. Stillingfleet wrote:

But when Reformation begins below, it is not to be expected that no disorders and heats should happen in the management of it; which gave distastes to such persons as Erasmus was, which made him like so ill the Wittenberg Reformation, and whatever was carried on by popular Tumults.⁵⁴

The danger of popular tumult was that it led to sectarianism, schism and destruction of peace and concord. After paraphrasing Erasmus's thoughts on Luther, Stillingfleet argued that England was different. In England, the reformation of the church was orderly, properly based on Scripture, moderate, peaceful, and Erasmian:

But here in England, the Reformation was begun by the consent of the King and the Bishops, who yielded to the retrenchment of the Popes exorbitant power, and the taking away some grosser abuses in Henry 8's. time; but in Edw. 6's time, and Q. Elizabeths, when it was settled on the principles it now stands, there was no such regard had to Luther, or Calvin, as to Erasmus

⁵¹ Stillingfleet Edward, *Several conferences between a Romish priest, a fanatic chaplain, and a divine of the Church of England* (London, Henry Mortlock: 1679) 115. Modeled on Erasmus's *Colloquies*, Stillingfleet often presented his polemics in a dialogue format. In this case, his own views were voiced by the Church of England divine character and countered the views of both a Catholic and a Puritan dissenter. His use of Erasmus was a means to differentiate the Church of England from both Catholicism and the Calvinism of the Puritans.

⁵² *Ibidem* 115.

⁵³ *Ibidem* 116.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem* 118.

and Melancthon, whose learning and moderation were in greater esteem here, than the fiery spirits of the other. From hence, things were carried with greater temper, the Church settled with a succession of Bishops; the Liturgie reformed according to the ancient Models; some decent ceremonies retained, without the sollies and superstitions which were before practised: and to prevent the extravagancies of the people in the interpreting of Scripture, the most excellent Paraphrase of Erasmus was translated into English and set up in Churches; and to this day, Erasmus is in far greater esteem among the Divines of our Church, than either Luther, or Calvin.⁵⁵

For Edward Stillingfleet, the peaceful, moderate, latitudinarian Church of England that demanded conformity and did not tolerate schism was, at its core, a church built on the legacy of Erasmus. His identification with Erasmus was both personal and national. Such sentiments, however, were also part of a concerted propaganda campaign against English dissenters and, more specifically, theological Calvinists.

Stillingfleet initially had sought greater accommodations for dissenters, but he became increasingly concerned about the zeal, fanaticism, and dogmatism of the separatist communities. By the early 1680s he, like L'Estrange, was publically condemning schism and dissent.⁵⁶ Yet where L'Estrange often used ridicule to demonize dissenters, Stillingfleet sought to persuade them back into full communion with the church. Tolerance and religious latitude were acceptable inside an established church, but Christianity itself was harmed, if not destroyed, when factions split into ever more dogmatic subgroups that threatened both religion and the state. Stillingfleet asked, 'Now, if a party appears active and dangerous, whose Principles are destructive to the Religion established by Law, I appeal to any man of common sense, whether it be sufficient ground for the Toleration of it, that one objection is taken off, when the other remains in its full force?' And in a pragmatic sense, Stillingfleet queried 'whether such a party, which is dangerous without Toleration, will grow less dangerous by it?'⁵⁷ Stillingfleet was again asking, as had L'Estrange, how a state can tolerate intolerant religious groups. For Stillingfleet that answer was obvious. Too much toleration, though on the surface desirable, would lead to the eventual destruction of peace, charity, and, ultimately, Christianity.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ibidem 119.

⁵⁶ See Carroll R.T., *The Common Sense Philosophy of Religion of Bishop Edward Stillingfleet* (The Hague: 1975) and Popkin R.H., "The philosophy of Bishop Stillingfleet", *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 9 (1971) 303–319.

⁵⁷ Stillingfleet Edward, *An answer to Mr. Cressy's Epistle* (London, Henry Mortlock: 1675) 500.

⁵⁸ See Walsham, *Charitable Hatred* 228–230.

Nearing the end of his life, Erasmus had taken up a number of these themes in his treatise *On Mending the Peace of the Church*. This work focused on both the necessity of Christian peace and unity within a single church and on the need for doctrinal and practical flexibility and charity within that single body of Christ. Erasmus wrote, 'There are many churches by distinction of persons and place, only one by profession of faith and communion of sacraments, so too there are said to be many tabernacles of God, although actually there is but one which embraces all the others, for all in Christ are one'.⁵⁹ Outside of the church was impiety and 'no real hope of blessedness'.⁶⁰ However, diversity within the church was necessary for maintaining peace and unity: 'In the human body there is a diversity of functions and parts. Yet all are nourished by the same soul. It is the same in the mystical body of Christ which is the Church'.⁶¹ As Hilmar Pabel has written, 'For Erasmus, ecclesiastical concord ranks above all other virtues, and any vice is more tolerable than that of discord in the Church'.⁶² This explains both Erasmus's condemnation of separatism and his demand for wide toleration within the church. Over a hundred years later, during the English Restoration, it was this rhetorical and ecclesiological worldview that was specifically and aggressively promulgated in the interests of the established church by latitudinarian clerics like Edward Stillingfleet.

In one of his most pointed polemics dealing with the essential nature of peace and concord for Christians, Stillingfleet not surprisingly turned to Erasmus for support. After quoting Erasmus he wrote that all Christians should remain within 'the Body of Christians, you live with; *keep within one Rule*; break not the *bounds of Peace* and *Vnity* which *Christ* hath set you; run not with the *false Teachers* into *Separating dividing courses*'.⁶³ Those with an inclination to separate because they viewed themselves as superior Christians should

go as far as they can towards preserving *Peace* and *Communion* among *Christians*; and not peevishly separate and *divide* the Church, because they

⁵⁹ Erasmus Desiderius, *On Mending the Peace in the Church*, in Dolan J.P. (ed.), *The Essential Erasmus* (New York: 1964) 340.

⁶⁰ Ibidem 340, 355. Erasmus understood that what drove people away from the church was disagreements over dogmas of faith, but he consistently asserted that most dogmatic disagreements stemmed from a lack of Christian charity rather than a fundamental disagreement over an essential of the faith. See ibidem 379–386.

⁶¹ Ibidem 372.

⁶² Pabel, "The Peaceful People of Christ" 83.

⁶³ Stillingfleet Edward, *The unreasonableness of separation* (London, Henry Mortlock: 1681) 169.

cannot in all things think as others do; nor others on the account of *greater sanctity and perfection*, despise the inferior sort of *Christians*, and *forsake* their *Communion*, but they ought all to do what lies possibly in them to preserve the *bonds of Peace*, and the *Vnity of the Church*.⁶⁴

Here is the Erasmian worldview of Christians with differing views learning to commune together. In his dispute with Luther, Erasmus suggested that Luther should not leave the church and that the church should not excommunicate Luther.⁶⁵ And in *De Libero Arbitrio*, his challenge to Luther's dogmatic adherence to predestination, Erasmus suggested that some topics were not appropriate for the public sphere where they stirred up dissensions among the common people.⁶⁶ Both Stillingfleet and L'Estrange echoed this same approach. Those whose consciences were troubled by the practices of the church of England should, out of charity, yield publically in order to sustain the greater Christian truths of peace and concord.⁶⁷ And both believed that divisive issues should be kept out of the presses and pulpits of England. Whether L'Estrange and Stillingfleet accurately represented Erasmus's views is somewhat beside the point. In their opinion, Erasmian toleration was an internal toleration that existed within a conformist church. They had no tolerance for religious separatists who stood outside of that church and condemned it.

L'Estrange and Stillingfleet were ready to accept the ambiguity of doctrinal truth.⁶⁸ In fact, it was precisely this ambiguity that necessitated a national church where an increasingly diverse nation could come together

⁶⁴ Stillingfleet, *The unreasonableness of separation* 170. For an analysis of Stillingfleet's support for intolerance and his dispute with John Locke, see Woolhouse R., *Locke: A Biography* (Cambridge: 2009) 166–169.

⁶⁵ Just prior to writing *De Libero Arbitrio*, Erasmus wrote the colloquy: *Inquisitio de Fide*, in which he sought to demonstrate the basic agreement on essentials between himself and Luther. According to John Dolan, 'It is obvious the purpose of the work is to show that in essential doctrines, as contained in the New Testament and the writings of the Fathers, there is no great difference between Catholics and Lutherans'. See Dolan, *The Essential Erasmus* 205.

⁶⁶ Erasmus, *A Discussion of Free Will*, in CWE 76:14.

⁶⁷ Stillingfleet echoed Erasmus's views that there should be charitable diversity within a single church in areas of *adiaphora*. In his latitudinarianism he also, like Erasmus, believed that *adiaphora* should be widely applied. According to Erasmus, 'the mark of theological learning: to define nothing beyond what is recorded in Holy Scripture, but to dispense in good faith what is there recorded. Many puzzling questions are now referred to an Ecuemenical Council. It would be much more fitting to defer such questions to that time when we shall see God face to face without the mirror and without the mystery'. See Erasmus to Jean de Carondelet, in Olin, *Six Essays* 101.

⁶⁸ Rather than doctrinal truth, the latitudinarians stressed the certainty of moral truth. See Griffin, *Latitudinarianism* 97.

in the interest of peace and charity. What L'Estrange and Stillingfleet could not accept was the democratic dogmatization of religious belief where every community and every sect could be as exclusive and intolerant as they saw fit. Here as well we see a concern for Erasmus. Drawing from Erasmus's *Querela Pacis*, Stillingfleet wrote that 'the Christian Religion doth lay the greatest obligations on mankind to Peace and Unity, by the strictest commands, the highest examples, and the most prevailing arguments; yet so much have the passions and interests of men overswai'd the sense of their duty, that as nothing ought to be more in our wishes, so nothing seems more remote from our hopes, than the universal Peace of the Christian World'.⁶⁹ In this sermon Stillingfleet argued that peace and unity were the essence of Christianity and that separatists therefore turned away from Christianity when they fought over dogmatic differences that were trivial compared to the primacy of Christian love and peace. Though he does not use the term in this particular sermon, Stillingfleet was calling for a liberal use of *adiaphora* in the same manner and for the same purposes as Erasmus. Stillingfleet directly paraphrased Erasmus when he asked, 'Is there any thing Christ and his Apostles have charged upon the Consciences of all Christians, than studying to preserve Peace and Unity among Christians?'⁷⁰ The demands of peace and unity superseded, in Stillingfleet's mind, the scruples and zeal of English Catholics, Puritans and other dissenters that led them to separate from the church.

The toleration established by the Act of Toleration in 1689 countered the Erasmian humanist tradition in several ways: first, it firmly established intolerance for Catholics in England and, simultaneously, it accepted the failure of a comprehensive Protestant church.⁷¹ Protestant disunity was tacitly accepted and the limited seeds of pluralism were sown. Perhaps most importantly, the church was increasingly viewed as separate from civil affairs. What Erasmus so desperately wanted to save and reinvigorate was precisely the model that legal toleration and pluralism later destroyed. The fragmentation of Christian communities and the process of confessionalization that was solidified in this new religious framework

⁶⁹ Stillingfleet, *The mischief of separation* 1.

⁷⁰ Ibidem 31–32. Compare with Erasmus in *The Complaint of Peace*, in CWE 27:299–301.

⁷¹ Alexandra Walsham writes that 'the misnamed Act of "Toleration" of 1689 was in fact a notable step backwards from the position attained under the sovereign infamously toppled by the constitutional coup that is now equally misleadingly celebrates as the "Glorious Revolution."' In reality, the Act, reasserted intolerance of Catholics while allowing exemptions for some Protestants. Walsham, *Charitable Hatred* 267.

also inverted the rhetorical paradigm upon which Erasmus constructed his understanding of toleration. What had been termed religious tolerance, the internally flexible church, was now depicted as a coercive church. The new rhetoric of religious tolerance demanded the legal acceptance of intolerant sectarianism.⁷² Two competing models of toleration thus vied for dominance in Restoration England. There was the Erasmian definition of tolerance that sought open-mindedness, intellectual flexibility, and prudence within a unified, peaceful, and comprehensive church that welcomed all in society who were willing to remain silent for the sake of charity in things where they differed from the views of the official church. This model pushed for an inclusive, comprehensive, and latitudinarian single church. The opposing model and definition of toleration sought the freedom to be as dogmatic and sectarian as any particular Protestant congregation and church desired. In a sense, inclusive and unified moderation vied with liberal sectarianism.⁷³

L'Estrange and Stillingfleet's use of Erasmus and their personal and corporate identification with Erasmus reflected the high esteem in which he was held by some of the leading supporters of the established church. Nevertheless, attempts to defend a comprehensive, doctrinally ambiguous compulsory church did not succeed. In 1685 James II took the throne and, in an attempt to remove penalties on Catholics, also sought religious freedom for dissenting communities. In no small part his overthrow was the result of his attempt to force religious toleration on a Protestant nation that did not want it.⁷⁴ A substantial percentage of English Protestants were willing to accept sectarian dissenters, but not Catholics, anti-trinitarians, or other more extreme groups. The revolution of 1688 ushered in a post-reformation era that abandoned the dream of Christian unity. James's dream of a Catholic resurgence in England greatly angered his Tory supporters and his latitudinarian bishops, including Stillingfleet. Lacking support for his vision for the Church of England, James turned away from the concept of a single unified church and invited the support

⁷² Gary Remer has also noted the 'political conservatism implicit in the other Northern humanists – a conservatism whose rhetorical motivation also underlay the humanist defense of religious toleration'. Remer, *Humanism and the Rhetoric of Toleration* 167.

⁷³ I am not suggesting that these were the only models for understanding religious toleration. Stillingfleet would seek something of a hybrid of these two during and following the reign of James II. Griffin, *Latitudinarianism* 28–30, 108–110, 147–151.

⁷⁴ For the complexities surrounding James II and his enforcement of toleration, see Pincus S., *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven: 2009) 198–209.

of Protestant separatists for his notion of religious freedom.⁷⁵ When both the Tories and the Latitudinarians subsequently abandoned James, he was left looking for support from these English dissenters who did not trust him and detested his Catholicism. The door was therefore open for a Whig rebellion. The legalized toleration of nonconformist Protestants that followed this revolution, along with renewed penalties against Catholics in seventeenth-century England, was a repudiation of Erasmian style toleration. While it may have never been an actual historical reality, the demise of the dream and ideal of a single Christian body of Christ became a cultural reality.⁷⁶

I certainly do not think we need to abandon the idea that Erasmus or his legacy was generally tolerant – certainly more so than the vast majority of his contemporaries – and that he envisioned a society and a church that was by design open to different Christian theologies and practices. Indeed, Erasmus went so far as to suggest that in the case of a heretic it was counter-productive to coerce obedience through violence and better to allow him his misguided views until he realized his error. In the meantime he might be excluded from the sacraments, but not from church or the sermon.⁷⁷ Such a sentiment reveals how distasteful Erasmus found all forms of violence sanctioned in the name of Christianity. He also wrote, in the preface to his paraphrase on the gospel of Mark, that ‘there is one universal Church, but there are many church communities. Christ is equally in all of them’.⁷⁸ This could be read to imply an acceptance of religious pluralism. In the context of his other writings, however, it is clear that Erasmus sees one church with room for variegated Christian theologies and practices. When we look closely at Erasmus we do not find a political thinker who laid out a clear, logical, defense for greater social and ecclesiastical freedom. His views on toleration have to be gleaned from a variety of texts where his primary focus was not religious toleration. In most instances, as James Tracy has pointed out, Erasmus’s exhortations on toleration were expressed as Christian advice to princes to ‘forbear’ in how they dealt with heterodoxy within their lands.⁷⁹ Tracy and others are therefore able to see Erasmus as a step on the road to the ideas of future

⁷⁵ See Southcombe G. – Tapsell G., *Restoration Politics, Religion and Culture* (New York: 2010) 91–92. Also see, De Krey, *Restoration and Revolution in Britain* 248–250.

⁷⁶ See Spurr J., *The Post-Reformation: 1603–1714* (Harlow, UK: 2006) 204–205.

⁷⁷ Erasmus Desiderius, “Preface to Paraphrase on Matthew”, in CWE 45:22.

⁷⁸ CWE 49:64.

⁷⁹ Tracy, “Erasmus, Coornhert and the Acceptance of Religious Disunity” 51.

generations and the next century of thinkers who argued for political and civil toleration for religious belief. The call for patient and loving princes was thus a precursor to later political theorists who moved beyond special pleading to argue for political freedoms that were intrinsic to the natural rights of man and not dependent on the good will of a prince. I agree with this assessment. However, Erasmus was also one of the most vocal and vociferous defenders of the comprehensive church – the single unified body of Christ.

In essence, a new post-reformation model was created where Christians could be as zealous and dogmatic as they chose while simultaneously living in peace with their neighbors – at least in theory.⁸⁰ The result, of course, was the rapid disintegration of the Christian commonwealth and the push for this disintegration came from zealous dissenting groups who believed that dogmas were extremely critical, that the liberal use of *adiaphora* was an abomination, and that true Christians had to practice and believe correctly. This was the same dogmatic zeal that Erasmus, Stillingfleet, and L'Estrange had feared and worked against. By the late seventeenth century, however, these increasingly fragmenting *communities of the pure* were pushing for liberty of conscience and the acceptance of a plurality of churches and congregations – so long as they were, in England, trinitarian Protestants. Erasmus was certainly a broadminded and tolerant thinker within the context of the early sixteenth century, but he was also looking back to the early church and envisioning a reformation of true Christianity characterized by *pax et concordia*. The Erasmian language of peace and unity was picked up by various early modern governments to argue that since peace and concord were the sum of Christian religion, the state had an obligation to legislate doctrinal disputes that could threaten peace and unity.⁸¹ Tolerance and peace were therefore used to defend civil penalties for religious nonconformity.⁸² All of this makes the lines of continuity between sixteenth century tolerance and modern pluralism very fuzzy indeed.

I want to conclude by returning to the topic of historical influence and the reception of Erasmus. Where is Erasmus's influence in this story?

⁸⁰ Walsham, *Charitable Hatred* 315–318.

⁸¹ *Ibidem* 237–238.

⁸² Andrew Pettegree has noted that 'toleration was a weapon, and in the sixteenth century it could be used as ruthlessly and cynically as persecution and intolerance to further particular political ends'. See Pettegree A., "The politics of toleration in the Free Netherlands, 1572–1620", in Grell. – Scribner, *Tolerance and Intolerance* 183.

While I suspect L'Estrange used Erasmus for polemical weight and that Stillingfleet was genuinely influenced by him, I do not think I can definitively answer this question. Both used Erasmus heavily and both may have had their thoughts and conception of the Christian faith shaped by reading Erasmus. It is clear that elements of Erasmus's thought and literary reception were present in Restoration England and that his legacy helped shape a worldview that remained a significant thread within English culture. When L'Estrange and Stillingfleet quoted and translated Erasmus in English they were doing so because they found congruence between their own thoughts and his texts. Most importantly, they felt that mentioning the name of Erasmus added value to their arguments. What remains surprising is that two of the most astute readers of Erasmus were also strong opponents of religious toleration for sectarianism. And yet, upon closer inspection, their positions make more sense. Their dream of a united Christian culture was failing and was being replaced by a new framework for Christian society. It is also the case that studying the reception of Erasmus does not tell us how Erasmus would have responded to the arguments of L'Estrange and Stillingfleet or how he would have felt about expanding toleration in a later period. Such a study can only reveal how they responded to and recast his writings. While in one sense examining the legacy of Erasmus in seventeenth century England might appear a trivial exercise and an insignificant intellectual enquiry, I would like to suggest that it is a valuable tool for demarcating the major historical trends that were reshaping English culture. The study of the reception of Erasmus's texts and legacy provides a useful contextual angle for examining debates that remained at the core of the Christian faith during the Reformation and beyond: the struggle over Christian unity and disunity, peace and violence, tolerance and intolerance. These issues were of great concern to Erasmus as they were to Roger L'Estrange and Edward Stillingfleet, who self-consciously identified themselves and the English church with his memory.

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PRAISE AND BLAME:
PETER CANISIUS'S AMBIVALENT ASSESSMENT OF ERASMUS*

Hilmar M. Pabel

Introduction

Martin Jung, in a recent biography of Philipp Melanchthon, referred to Melanchthon's older contemporary and correspondent, Erasmus, as 'the pope of the humanists'.¹ Jung deserves credit for devising an alternative to the trite title 'prince of the humanists'. Yet how appropriate is it to elevate Erasmus metaphorically to the pinnacle of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in order to claim his leadership of European humanism? Jung's designation suggests a confessionalization of Erasmus, especially in light of the turmoil of division within Western Christianity that he witnessed. True, once Martin Luther's irreparable break with Rome led to constant political, social, and religious conflict, Erasmus remained within the Roman fold largely because in matters of doctrine he found the weight of tradition more compelling than what he viewed as the paradoxes of Protestantism. Yet he was not eager to embrace a confessionalized identity. In the first volume of his *Hyperaspistes* (1526), Erasmus told Luther and his supporters:

I know that in this Church, which you call papist, there are many people who do not please me, but I see the same sort of people in your Church. Nevertheless the evils to which you are accustomed are easier to tolerate. Thus I shall tolerate this Church until I see a better one, and it is forced to tolerate me until I myself become better.

A few sentences earlier, he had asserted: 'I have never forsaken the Catholic Church'.² Erasmus combines his adherence to this Church with a frank acknowledgement of its deficiencies. His vision of his relationship with the Catholic Church is one of almost mutually grudging acceptance. He

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¹ Jung M.H., *Philipp Melanchthon und seine Zeit* (Göttingen: 2010) 14.

² LB, X, 1257F–1258A.

clearly winced when Luther castigated him for being 'a papist and enemy of Christ'.³ Erasmus might have interpreted the title of 'pope of the humanists' as at best a satirical epithet.

After Erasmus's death in 1536, Catholics and Protestants not only distanced themselves from him; they also deployed his authority in confessional conflicts. In 1558, Stanislaus Hosius, the Bishop of Warmia in Poland, published *Verae, christianae, catholicaeque doctrinae solida propugnatio*, a vindication of Catholic doctrine in light of 'the heresies of our time', as the title page made clear. The future cardinal (as of 1561) admired Erasmus: 'that great man' and a 'man endowed with a unique intellect and extraordinary learning'.⁴ A quotation from the *Contra pseudoevangelicos*, which Cornelis Augustijn called Erasmus's 'strident attack on the Protestant movement',⁵ exposed in Hosius's opinion 'the sort of intolerable tyranny and arrogance' common among 'those evangelical civic officials'.⁶ After producing quotations from the *Contra pseudoevangelicos* and from two other anti-Protestant polemics, *Epistola ad fratres inferioris Germaniae* and *Hyperaspistes II*, Hosius pits Erasmus against his putative Protestant audience: 'Thus did that man, endowed with extraordinary judgment, conclude that your gospel had opened the window to every form of wickedness'.⁷ Yet in the wake of the publication in 1559 of the first papal Index of Forbidden Books, Hosius removed a laudatory reference to Erasmus from his catechism *Confessio fidei catholicae christiana*, first published in 1553, to escape the discomfiting attention that Roman inquisitors directed towards his books.⁸

³ Allen, *Opus Epistolarum*, vol. XI, 134.54, Ep. 3019.

⁴ Hosius Stanislaus, *Verae, christianae, catholicaeque doctrinae solida propugnatio* (Cologne, Maternus Cholinus: 1558) 94, 146.

⁵ ASD, IX-1, 274.

⁶ Hosius, *Propugnatio* 94.

⁷ Ibidem 148.

⁸ Wojtyńska H.D., "Stanislaus Hosius im Kreise der römischen Humanisten, 1558–1560", in Jähnig B. – Karp H.-J. (eds.), *Stanislaus Hosius: Sein Wirken als Humanist, Theologe und Mann der Kirche in Europa* (Münster: 2007) 29–30. For the publication of the first edition of the *Confessio*, see Wojtyńska H.D., "Stanislaus Hosius (1504–1579)", in Iserloh E. (ed.), *Katholische Theologen der Reformationszeit* (Münster: 1988), vol. V, 140. In 1557, before quoting him, Hosius referred to 'Erasmus of Rotterdam, a man endowed with superior learning and a certain unique sweetness in speaking'. See Hosius Stanislaus, *Confessio catholicae fidei christiana* (Mainz, Franz Behem: 1557) CXXX recto. In 1560, Hosius retained the quotation but simply indicated that Erasmus was the author without describing him. See Hosius Stanislaus, *Confessio catholicae fidei christiana* (Vienna, Michael Zimmermann: 1560) CXXX verso. That Hosius retained the quotation and kept Erasmus's name in his list of principal authors in the 1560 edition undermines Wojtyńska's claim that the Index had brought

The indefatigable Lutheran controversialist Matthias Flacius Illyricus, banned by the Index of 1559,⁹ appealed several times to the authority of Erasmus in his anti-Catholic polemic *De sectis, dissensionibus, contradictionibus et confusionibus doctrinae, religionis, scriptorum et doctorum pontificorum* (1565). After producing excerpts from the *Lives of the Popes* by Bartolomeo Platina (1421–1481), Flacius proceeds to Erasmus's 'witness to the dreadful discord and reciprocal condemnations of the popes'. A substantial excerpt from Erasmus's lengthy discussion of marriage and divorce in a note on 1 *Corinthians* 7:39 in the *Annotations on the New Testament* supplies the evidence.¹⁰ Flacius regards Platina and Erasmus as 'two worthy papists'. Erasmus bears witness to the 'overt and notorious strife of the papist religion' evident in its many monastic orders and to the raging battles among monks on doctrinal matters. He is, 'notwithstanding every objection (*omni exceptione*), the superior witness' to the disagreements among the scholastic doctors. Erasmus ought to be trusted 'since he is even regarded as a most learned Catholic by the papists themselves'.¹¹

While Flacius cleverly asserts Erasmus's Catholic identity to use him as a Catholic weapon against Catholicism, he exaggerates the respect Erasmus commanded in Catholic circles. Erasmus joined Flacius in the Index of 1559. He was the target of a uniquely detailed prohibition: 'Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam with all his commentaries, annotations, *scholia*, dialogues, letters, critical judgments (*censurae*), editions, books, and writings, even if they contain absolutely nothing against religion or about religion'.¹² Yet, despite his declining popularity in Catholic Europe, Erasmus was not completely *persona non grata* in the Counter Reformation as the case of Peter Canisius SJ makes clear.

Canisius was among the most dynamic of the first recruits of the Society of Jesus, which he joined in 1543, three years after its foundation with papal approbation by Ignatius of Loyola. Flacius's exaggerated claim in

about Hosius's 'definitive break' with Erasmus. See Hosius, *Confessio* (1560) fol.* iiii recto; Wojtyńska, "Stanislaus Hosius im Kreise der römischen Humanisten" 30.

⁹ *Index auctorum, et librorum qui ab Officio Sanctae Rom. et Vniuersalis Inquisitionis caueri ab omnibus et singulis in uniuersa Christiana Republica mandantur* (Rome, Antonio Blado: 1559) fol. F4r. On Flacius, see Kaufmann T., "Matthias Flacius Illyricus: Lutherischer Theologe und Magdeburger Publizist", in Freitag W. (ed.), *Mitteldeutscher Lebensbilder: Menschen im Zeitalter der Reformation* (Cologne: 2004) 178–199.

¹⁰ Flacius Illyricus Matthias, *De sectis, dissensionibus, contradictionibus et confusionibus doctrinae, religionis, scriptorum et doctorum pontificorum* (Basel, Paulus Queckus: 1565) 64 (quotation) – 66. For the excerpt from the *Annotations*, see ASD, VI-8, 164–168.107–163.

¹¹ Flacius, *De sectis* 66, 74, 75, 78, 80.

¹² *Index auctorum, et librorum*, B4v.

De sectis that Canisius was 'the principal founder or certainly the restorer and propagator of the Jesuits'¹³ still revealed the reputation that Canisius enjoyed. By 1565, his famous catechisms had appeared only anonymously, but Flacius connected Canisius with 'the catechism of the Jesuits', which represented the 'manifest falsehood and impiety of papist doctrine'. He held that Canisius, the 'chief patriarch' of the Jesuits, had 'reduced' the catechism 'into a compendium'.¹⁴ At the time that Flacius published *De sectis*, Canisius still served as the first head of the Jesuit Province of Upper Germany (1556–1569). During his term as provincial, Canisius opened several Jesuit schools and made a name for himself as a forceful preacher. In 1567, he received a commission from Pope Pius V (1566–1572) to write against a new Protestant ecclesiastical history that began to appear in print in 1559 and reached completion in 1574.¹⁵ This publication was the so-called Magdeburg Centuries, whose aim was to discredit the papacy historically. Flacius was the general editor. Canisius entitled his riposte *De verbi Dei corruptelis – On the Corrupters of the Word of God*. The polemic consisted of two treatises, one on John the Baptist (1571), the other on the Virgin Mary (1577). They appeared together as a two-volume work in 1583. The second treatise provides evidence for John O'Malley's claim that of the early Jesuits Canisius was 'among those who were most familiar with Erasmus's religious writings'.¹⁶

Previous scholarship has interpreted Canisius's reception of Erasmus in various ways. Bruce Mansfield emphasized in that reception a qualified balance: 'a certain balance of judgment (though with an unmistakable tilt)' in the treatise on Mary. The balance tilted towards censure, not acclaim. Thus Canisius's assessment of Erasmus's position on devotion to Mary 'strikes a balance, but not a perfect balance'.¹⁷ Josef Lössl perceived greater equilibrium in the other principal source of Canisius's interpretation of Erasmus, his anthology of St. Jerome's correspondence (1562). On the one hand, Canisius's preface to his edition and the edition itself reveal dependence on Erasmus, the celebrated sixteenth-century editor of Jerome. On the other, Canisius criticized Erasmus in the preface. Canisius made the effort to achieve 'a balance (*Gleichgewicht*) in this tension

¹³ Flacius, *De sectis* 77.

¹⁴ Ibidem, 34.

¹⁵ Brodrick J., *Saint Peter Canisius* (Chicago: 1980) 679, 685.

¹⁶ O'Malley J.W., *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: 1993) 263.

¹⁷ Mansfield B., *Phoenix of His Age: Interpretations of Erasmus, c. 1550–1750* (Toronto: 1979) 48, 49.

(*Spannungsverhältnis*)' between following in Erasmus's footsteps and contending with him.¹⁸ J.H.M. Tesser kept in tension Canisius's 'appreciation of Erasmus literary gifts' and the 'antithesis between Canisius and Erasmus' without the suggestion of a balance but paid more attention to the 'damning verdict' that Canisius 'frequently pronounced about the character of Erasmus and about many of the views that he expressed'.¹⁹ Roland Crahay tilted the interpretation in the opposite direction from Mansfield and Tesser. Canisius was open to the charge of demonstrating tendencies that were 'a little too "annexionist"'. By this Crahay meant Canisius's 'anxiety to "rehabilitate" ("*récupérer*") Erasmus's that found its origin beyond Erasmus's "broadly positive" opinion of the Virgin Mary' in a shared rejection of the Protestant monopolization of the term 'evangelical' and claim upon 'evangelical liberty'.²⁰ Anton Troll was primarily interested in Canisius as a reader of Erasmus, particularly of the humanist's comments about Mary. In many aspects, Canisius demonstrated a correct evaluation of Erasmus, 'but perhaps Canisius appreciates Erasmus's favourable statements about Mary a little too much'.²¹

A review of the evidence yields a different conclusion, however. Canisius harboured no anxiety or eagerness to recuperate Erasmus for Catholicism. Nor do his comments about Erasmus, taken as a whole, disclose a deliberate design to take a balanced approach. Canisius's evaluation of Erasmus betrays ambivalence, not balance. His hostility was palpable, but he could not bring himself to pronounce a consistent condemnation. Praise and blame of Erasmus coexist uneasily in the mind of one of the most prolific writers of the early Society of Jesus.

*Erasmus and Erasmians in Canisius's Anthology
of Jerome's Letters*

Canisius's first sustained and public evaluation of Erasmus appeared in the preface to his anthology of Jerome's letters: *Epistolae B. Hieronymi*

¹⁸ Lössl J., "Konfessionelle Theologie und humanistisches Erbe: Zur Hieronymusbriefedition des Petrus Canisius", in Berndt R. (ed.), *Petrus Canisius SJ (1521–1597): Humanist und Europäer* (Berlin: 2000) 142, 151 (quotation).

¹⁹ Tesser J.H.M., *Petrus Canisius als humanistisch geleerde* (Amsterdam: 1932) 268.

²⁰ Crahay R., "Le procès d'Érasme à la fin du XVI^e siècle: position de quelques Jésuites", in *Colloque Érasmien de Liège* (Paris: 1987) 130, 131.

²¹ Troll A., "Der hl. Petrus Canisius und Erasmus", *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 24 (1974) 367.

Stridonensis, eloquentissimi & prestantissimi Ecclesiae Doctoris. The preface was dated November 1561. Sebaldus Mayer printed the anthology in Dillingen the following year. Canisius revised the preface for the second edition of 1565, which he also entrusted to Mayer. The anthology became something of a printing success. Through some forty subsequent editions it remained in print until the nineteenth century.²²

Canisius surely knew that in producing his anthology he was venturing into territory that Erasmus had dominated since 1516, when Johann Froben printed in four folio volumes his edition of the genuine and spurious letters. The combination of these volumes with the five that contained Jerome's scriptural commentaries, edited by the brothers Bruno, Basil, and Boniface Amerbach, constituted the first printed *opera omnia* of Jerome. Erasmus held the position of editor-in-chief, as it were, for the complete project. Over the next five decades, Erasmus's revised edition of the letters was reprinted several times, both separately and as part of the *opera omnia*. The last two Erasmian *opera omnia*, again in nine folio volumes, appeared in Basel in 1553 and 1565.²³

Which edition or editions did Canisius subject to anonymous criticism in his preface? He writes:

I observed and no less lamented that an immense and divine treasure, that is Jerome's letters, has escaped notice, imprisoned in huge volumes, bought by few because the exorbitant price deterred most people, and consulted by still fewer because these volumes made for inconvenient reading (*quod ex fontibus illis lectio incommode peteretur*) and a confusing classification (*ordo perturbatus*) increased the sense of aversion.²⁴

Since 1467, the latest possible year of the *editio princeps*,²⁵ printers generally produced Jerome's letters in large tomes. The book that Peter Schoeffer printed in Mainz in 1470 was particularly enormous. For the most part the incunabular editions and their sixteenth-century reissues arranged

²² Meuwese A., "De uitgave van Hieronymus' brieven door Petrus Canisius", *Historisch tijdschrift* 4 (1925) 3; Lössl, "Konfessionelle Theologie" 122, 153; Pabel H.M., *Herculean Labours: Erasmus and the Editing of St. Jerome's Letters in the Renaissance* (Leiden: 2008) 101.

²³ On Erasmus's edition of Jerome, see Clausi B., *Ridar voce al'antico Padre: L'edizione erasmiana delle Lettere di Gerolamo* (Soveria Manelli: 2000) and Pabel, *Herculean Labours*.

²⁴ Braunsberger O. (ed.), *Beati Petri Canisii Societatis Iesu epistolae et acta*, 8 vols. (Freiburg i. Br.: 1896–1923), vol. III, 278.

²⁵ Sharpe J.L. III, "Impressum apud Ruessinger", in Gilbert B. (ed.), *A Leaf from the Letters of St. Jerome, first printed by Sixtus Reissinger [sic], Rome, c. 1466–1467* (Los Angeles-London: 1981) 9–30; Lennep R. van, "L'édition princeps des *Epistolae (et tractatus) S. Hieronymi*", *Livre et l'estampe* 126 (1986) 197–235.

Jerome's letters into a tripartite taxonomy further divided into detailed categories. Erasmus revised but maintained a tripartite structure without repeating the elaborate scheme of subclassifications. Canisius's complaint about the *ordo perturbatus* may have been as exaggerated as his claim that Jerome's letters were ignored because they were inaccessible. The many editions that preceded that of Erasmus and the many printings of Erasmus's edition point to an enduring market for Jerome's letters. Perhaps Canisius meant to dismiss all his predecessors to enhance the marketability of his own anthology. Several sentences later, Canisius admits to having truncated some of the texts in his anthology. He curiously directs those who wish to read the complete texts to 'the large and stout volumes or tomes – of which nine are dedicated to Jerome – that are everywhere available'.²⁶ If these volumes are as repulsively inaccessible as Canisius earlier claimed, why does he refer his readers to them with the assurance that they can readily consult them? The nine-volume edition can only be the Erasmian *opera omnia*.

Canisius's preface begins with some Erasmian traits evident in Erasmus's dedication of his edition to Archbishop William Warham of Canterbury and his biography of Jerome. Much as Erasmus sought acclaim and credit for his Herculean labours in editing Jerome, Canisius trusts that his audience – in the first instance the faculty and students of the University of Dillingen to whom the preface was addressed – would graciously take his own effort into account. Canisius's Jerome initially has much in common with that of Erasmus. The Jesuit emphasizes Jerome's authority and the 'elegance' and 'usefulness' of his writings. Jerome's combination of learning and eloquence, of sacred and secular studies, of a variety of languages and disciplines was virtually unparalleled among the Latin Fathers, exemplars of pious learning and of a learned piety. Many of these could not match Jerome's eloquence.²⁷

Juxtaposing the relevant passages from the preface of Canisius and the *Vita Hieronymi* of Erasmus demonstrates how closely the former relied on the latter when it came to emphasizing Jerome's accomplishments through Greece's esteem for him. The italicized words indicate specific points of dependence:

²⁶ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. III, 279.

²⁷ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. III, 274–275. For Erasmus, see Allen, *Opus Epistolarum*, vol. II, 214–215.99–141; 218.257–267, Ep. 396.

Canisius (1561)²⁸

Est enim *erudita* certe, et eloquentiae studijs mirum in modum excultata Graecia, *totius orbis magistra*, vt idcirco vel sola, vel praecipua *omnes omnium gentium literas soleat fastidire*. Quo magis admirari par est, quod haec ipsa, scriptorum alioqui latinorum contemptrix, iam olim tanti nostrum fecerit Hieronymum, vt eius quamuis *hominis Dalmatae commentarios* non legerit modo, verum etiam suo approbarit calculo, adeoque *in suam linguam transferendos curarit*.

For Greece is undoubtedly learned and wondrously refined in the pursuit of eloquence so that, therefore, as either the sole or chief teacher of the entire world she customarily abhors all the literature of every nation. So it is all the more surprising that Greece herself, otherwise contemptuous of Latin authors, long ago so much valued Jerome, although he was a Dalmatian man, that she not only read but also praised his commentaries and thus undertook the effort to have them translated into her own tongue.

Erasmus (1516)²⁹

Tantum illi famae et auctoritatis pepererat vitae integritas, sed praecipue libri doctrinam inimitabilem prae se ferentes, et doctrinae parem eloquentiam, vt *erudita* quoque Graecia, quae *consuevit omnes omnium gentium literas fastidire*, vnus Hieronymi *commentarios in suam linguam transferendos curarit*; nec puduerit *totius orbis semper magistram*, post tot eximios scriptores, *ab homine Dalmata* discere.

A virtuous life, but especially his books, which manifested incomparable learning and an eloquence commensurate with his scholarship had obtained for him so great a reputation and such great authority that learned Greece also, which was accustomed to abhor all the literature of every nation, undertook the effort to translate the commentaries of Jerome alone into her own tongue. Nor was the eternal teacher of the entire world ashamed, after so many eminent authors, to learn from a Dalmatian man.

Canisius's debt to Erasmus included not only the topic of the Grecian reverence for Jerome but the very words that informed the discussion of the topic. The erudite teacher of the entire world made sure that the commentaries of the man from Dalmatia were translated into Greek. The passage from Canisius's preface is 'strikingly reminiscent of Erasmus', to quote Josef Lössl,³⁰ precisely because Canisius both read and borrowed from or, dare we say, plagiarized Erasmus.

²⁸ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. III, 275.

²⁹ Ferguson W.K. (ed.), *Erasmi Opuscula: A Supplement to the Opera Omnia* (Hildesheim: 1978) 171.

³⁰ Lössl, "Konfessionelle Theologie" 136.

Like Erasmus, Canisius employs Augustine to enhance Jerome's value. Yet their tactics differ. Erasmus in his *Vita Hieronymi* began by censuring Augustine for criticizing Jerome. Eventually Augustine abandoned his criticism, joining Jerome in a defense of 'the Catholic faith against the attacks of heretics' and appreciating 'Jerome's greatness'.³¹ Canisius confines the friction between Augustine and Jerome to an observation about 'the most holy doctor and most praiseworthy Bishop of Hippo, Augustine, who sometimes disagreed with Jerome the priest'.³² After characterizing the bond between them as sustained by 'not only brotherly but also divine love', Canisius emphasizes at length with several quotations from Augustine the respect that he had for Jerome.³³

The portraits of Jerome by Erasmus and Canisius differ in detail. Erasmus viewed the Church Father as a foil for early sixteenth-century monasticism, ignorant theologians, scholasticism, and the fastidious eloquence of Italian Renaissance humanism.³⁴ While Canisius contrasts Jerome's learning with the laziness and ignorance of the youth of his day, he opposes a morally and spiritually rigorous Jerome to those who champion faith at the cost of the works of faith. They devote themselves to licentiousness, mock 'ancient piety', reject the sacraments, abolish the Mass (*cultus divinus*), and think it is sufficient to put their faith in Christ's grace in order to be justified and saved. Canisius's Jerome was clearly no friend of Protestants. In praise of Jerome, Canisius salutes 'the holy and apostolic heart', devoted to serving 'Christ and Christ's Church'. He exclaims: 'Oh severity of holy discipline, wondrous and worthy of emulation, which, combined with the daily mortification of the flesh, sustained, strengthened, celebrated, and exalted the marvelous spirit of Jerome!'³⁵

This acclamation of Hieronymian rigour leads directly into an evaluation of Erasmus. Canisius imagines a reader who, in comparing his edition of Jerome with that of Erasmus, has noticed differences in taxonomy and the lack of extended editorial commentary: 'Next, perhaps someone, both surprised by the change in arrangement and having perceived the absence of the customary additions, here and now will demand (*requirat*) our opinion of the man from Rotterdam, who time and again published

³¹ Ferguson, *Erasmi Opuscula* 167–168.

³² Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. III, 275–276.

³³ Ibidem, vol. III, 276.

³⁴ Ferguson, *Erasmi Opuscula* 145–146, 175–176, 178–180, 182–183, 185.

³⁵ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. III, 277–278, 279, 280.

Jerome for us'.³⁶ In short, Canisius's answer is that Erasmus was a peerless expert in *belles lettres* but a dangerous dabbler in theology.

This assessment had its roots in the standard opinion of humanists voiced by scholastic theologians since the fifteenth century. They complained that humanists should confine themselves to literature and avoid theology. Humanists responded by decrying the ignorance of the theologians. The mutual recriminations created an intellectual environment in which Catholics saw humanism as allied with the nascent Protestant Reformation. As hostile confessional boundaries solidified and squeezed an irenic Erasmian humanism into a lonely no man's land, Protestants could evaluate Erasmus as the ardently Catholic Canisius did. In the 1520s and 1530s, the Lutheran theologian Antonius Corvinus distinguished between Erasmus's literary accomplishments and his lack of expertise in matters of religion.³⁷

Canisius begins his assessment of Erasmus with the lament: 'In truth, I wish he had merely published Jerome and had not also repeatedly soiled him with his *scholia*, or, should I say, *scoria*, and, furthermore, had [not] sold coal for gold, as they say, by administering poisons in place of antidotes'.³⁸ In good humanist fashion, Canisius seeks to render his criticism more eloquent with a play on Erasmus's words. Erasmus punctuated his edition of Jerome's letters with an abundance of explanatory notes that he called *scholia*, which Canisius rejects as editorial dross. Another less frequent but obviously equally reprehensible genre of editorial commentary was what Erasmus called an *antidotus*. His *antidoti* contrasted ancient Christian ideals manifested in Jerome's letters with the lamentable defects of sixteenth-century Christianity.³⁹ Far from combating poisons, these *antidoti*, according to Canisius, were absolutely toxic.

After conceding Erasmus's literary excellence, Canisius returns to expressing bitter regret, a regret that produces an increasingly unpalatable characterization of Erasmus:

Nobody could envy, nobody could justifiably disparage his praises in the realm of more elegant literature (*in politiori literatura*). Yet it would have been desirable – if we could obtain anything with our wishes – if Desiderius,

³⁶ Ibidem, vol. III, 280.

³⁷ Rummel E., *The Confessionalization of Humanism in Reformation Germany* (New York: 2000) 11–18, 132–133.

³⁸ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. III, 280.

³⁹ On Erasmus's *scholia* on Jerome, see Clausi, *Ridar voce all'antico Padre* 211–229, and Pabel, *Herculean Labours* 291–317; on the *antidoti*, see Pabel, *Herculean Labours* 334–341.

satisfied with the limits of his expertise, had either completely refrained from theology or had demonstrated that he was endowed with less arrogance and with a more sincere disposition when evaluating the writings of the Fathers. For, in fact, after Erasmus began to play the theologian, he was overly self-confident and claimed too much for himself. Often more fascinated with words than with things, he comported himself like a stern Aristarchus. While rating the writings of theologians, he, moreover, actually allowed himself what until now in the Church nobody else, however learned or wise, either seemed to demand for himself or thought was owed to him by others. Certainly there was no lack of eggs for Luther to hatch. Erasmus the monk attacked the monks, and, hardly a serious philosopher, he treated the scholastic doctors almost as if they were idiots. Then, motivated by I know not what spirit, he practically wanted to pursue only a Pyrrhonic theology with respect to the teachings of the Church. But while he found fault with and assailed others, he nevertheless constantly made excuses for himself and vehemently fought on his own behalf. Consequently, he was not interested in deferring to anybody. At length it came to pass that none of his enemies toppled the authority of Erasmus's name more fiercely than the founder himself and that now he possesses about as much influence among the impious as he does among the devout. He must be an irascible judge who, brandishing, as it were, the rod of punishment, takes the greatest liberty in assessing current and past theologians and who meanwhile refuses to accept the judgment of either teachers or students.⁴⁰

The regrettable editor of Jerome, despite his literary prowess, deteriorates into a brash and prickly pseudo-theologian. In an initial classical reference, Canisius compares Erasmus unfavourably with Aristarchus the renowned Greek textual critic. While not repeating the old saw that Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched, he clearly alludes to it, thus associating the two. In a second classical reference, this time to Pyrrho the sceptic, Canisius in effect agrees with Luther that Erasmus subjected doctrine to scepticism.

Canisius's characterization of Erasmus leads directly to a lament about his irreverent disciples, the *Erasmiani*. The Jesuit links them with two of Erasmus's works, the *Praise of Folly* and the *Colloquies*, famous for their satire. Folly (*Moria*) taught wisdom to the Erasmians, who have been corrupted by perverse colloquies (*Colloquia praua*). Canisius mocks their supposed learning and eloquence. 'Sufficiently learned', they know how 'to bite and tear to shreds' what they call 'the little priests, the little friars, and petty human regulations'. They are 'beautifully eloquent when they stroke the impious ears and minds of common folk by disparaging the members of religious orders and their institutions'. Finally, Canisius

⁴⁰ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. III, 280–281.

brands the Erasmians as *agents provocateurs* (*belli actores*) as they reprimand the clergy with satire and hostility, talk filthy rot about religious ritual, and laugh 'impiously with their Lucian'. The Lucian of the Erasmians must have been Erasmus himself, who published translations of the ancient satirist.⁴¹ To their faults Canisius adds a 'stupendous conceit' by which they take the liberty 'to make pronouncements in their cups as if from an oracle (*velut ex tripode*) about divine mysteries and the sacraments, which for the most part defy knowledge'.⁴²

Canisius in effect uses Erasmus, without rival in *politiori literatura*, against the Erasmians. Lössl notes two references to the *Adages*.⁴³ When Canisius observes the corrupting influence of the *Colloquia* on the Erasmians, he plays on the proverbial saying *corrumpunt mores bonos colloquia prava* (*Adages* I.x.74), which translates to, literally, 'immoral conversations pervert good morals', or, more familiarly, 'bad company corrupts good morals'. Erasmus ends his comment on the proverb by drawing a parallel between speaking and reading: 'Those who consume their entire lives in pagan literature will end up as pagans. Those who read nothing beyond lewd authors necessarily reflect lewd morals'.⁴⁴ By extension, Canisius might add that those who read Erasmus become like him and those who read his corrupting *Colloquies* will reflect their corruption. He employs the expression *ex tripode* (*Adages* I.vii.90) to mock the soused certainty of the Erasmians about matters that transcend explanation. Erasmus explains that we use the adage, derived from the Delphic or Pythian tripod, when we wish to insist on the truth and certainty of something. He also sees a drunken dimension to *ex tripode*, associating this adage with *in vino veritas* ('in wine there is truth').⁴⁵ Canisius, who uses *ex tripode* satirically, would hardly describe the pronouncements of the quaffing Erasmians as true.

Keeping Company with Erasmus

Canisius undoubtedly kept company with Erasmus. He read the *Vita Hieronymi* and presented readers with a Jerome who in some important

⁴¹ Rummel E., *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics* (Toronto: 1985) 49–69.

⁴² Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. III, 281.

⁴³ Lössl, "Konfessionelle Theologie" 140 n. 98, 141, n. 101.

⁴⁴ ASD, II-2, 474.202–204.

⁴⁵ ASD, II-2, 218–220.940–941, 968–970.

respects was similar to the Erasmian Jerome. Canisius's correspondence offers more hints of reading Erasmus.

Erasmus's *Adages* may have found resonance in the humanist delight in proverbs that Canisius shared with him. The two 'Latin tags' that Canisius incorporated in a letter of January 1547 from the military camp of Emperor Charles V in Geislingen are thus far from 'utterly unhelpful to an historian'.⁴⁶ The young priest served as the envoy to the Emperor of the clergy of Cologne in the affair of Hermann von Wied, the Archbishop of Cologne who had become a Protestant. Not pleased with his whereabouts, Canisius tells the theologian and cathedral canon of Cologne Johann Gropper that he has learned the truth of two common sayings. The first is that camp followers are wretches: 'miseri Miseri, qui castra sequuntur'. The saying has its origin in the line from the Roman poet Marcus Annaeus Lucanus that camp followers deserve neither trust nor affection: 'nulla fides pietasque uiris qui castra secuntur' (*Pharsalia* 10.407). The second saying holds that war encompasses much that is useless: 'Multa bellum habet inania'.⁴⁷ This closely resembles the proverb collected by Erasmus: 'multa in bellis inania' (*Adages* II.x.19).

Four years later, on 5 April 1551, as rector of the University of Ingolstadt, Canisius issued to the students a schedule for the resumption of classes after a vacation. Now at the end of the vacation, he felt he could employ the commonplace saying: 'foras Cares, non amplius Anthisteria' ('get out, Carians, the Anthesterian feast is over').⁴⁸ This adage (I.ii.65), Erasmus points out, applies to those who hope to enjoy the same advantages for ever or who believe that the same thing will always be permitted that was allowed only temporarily. The Athenians called the month in which many flowers blossomed the Anthesterion. The slaves, freed for the time being from their tasks, were allowed to recline at table during the parties. Recalled to their work after the holiday, the slaves were told: 'Get out, Carians, the Anthesterian feast is now over'. The Athenians called the slaves Carians because this people customarily hired themselves out for work as slaves of any who would hire them.⁴⁹

Canisius used proverbs in letters to the humanist Cardinal Hosius. In October 1562, as Hosius served as one of the three presidents of the Council of Trent, Canisius complained about the Zwinglian Reformer Johannes

⁴⁶ Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* 82.

⁴⁷ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. I, 235.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, vol. I, 352.

⁴⁹ ASD, II-1, 282–283.663–675.

Fabricius Montanus (1527–1566): ‘so as to set his mouth against heaven (cf. *Psalm* 73:9) and make an elephant out of a fly ([sc. ex] *musca elephantem conficiat*)’ he was the first, unless I am mistaken, to attack the sacred synod so shamelessly’.⁵⁰ Erasmus records the adage about exaggeration as ‘*elephantum ex musca facis*’ (I.ix.69).⁵¹ Canisius did not clarify the connection between the adage and Fabricius’s attack on the Council of Trent. In September 1577, Canisius sent to Hosius a copy of his recently completed treatise on the Virgin Mary. He anticipated that some might demand ‘that more and better things be written on this most splendid topic and that many things be discussed more subtly. But beginners deserve forbearance (*‘uenia primum experienti*)’.⁵² In his comment on the adage (I.ix.61), Erasmus observes: ‘We must forgive the inexperienced if they make a mistake out of ignorance as they begin to pursue any new undertaking’.⁵³

An allusion to a New Testament passage in Canisius’s correspondence represents a clue that suggests the influence of Erasmus’s biblical scholarship. Demonstrating such influence was more controversial than learning proverbs from Erasmus. He designed his biblical scholarship to change the enterprise of theology, in which, according to Canisius, he did more harm than good. Towards the end of a report to Ignatius of Loyola on the Jesuits in Germany, Canisius on 30 April 1551 writes:

All honour and glory be to Christ, to whom we should all also pray that he thrust his labourers (*extrudat ut operarios suos*) into this abandoned vineyard, overrun, as Isaiah says, with brambles and thorns, since it is not pruned or dug up. Its wall is demolished, leaving it to be plundered and trampled underfoot by heretics.⁵⁴

Before referring to the unhappy fate of God’s vineyard (*Isaiah* 5:5–6), Canisius alludes to *Matthew* 9:38 or *Luke* 10:2, in which Jesus bids his disciples: ‘Ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest’. One reading of the Vulgate text for both verses renders the command in this way: ‘*Rogate ergo Dominum messis ut mittat operarios in messem suam*’.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. III, 491.

⁵¹ *ASD*, II-2, 388.327.

⁵² Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. VII, 416.

⁵³ *ASD*, II-2, 382.206–207.

⁵⁴ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. I, 364.

⁵⁵ This is the reading in *Biblia cum pleno apparatu summariorum concordantiarum et quadruplici repertorii siue indicii numerique foliorum distinctione* (Basel, Johann Froben: 1514) fols. 285r, 301r.

In his *Annotations on the New Testament*, Erasmus objected to the verb *mittere* because it lacked the sense of force in the Greek verb ἐκβάλλειν. In a note on *Matthew* 9:38, Erasmus revealed that in some 'very old manuscripts' he found 'ut eiiciat', 'that he might drive out', instead of 'ut mittat', 'that he might send'. Hilary also read 'eiiciat'. Erasmus preferred the verb *extrudere* 'so that we might understand either the swift dispatch or also the thrusting of the unwilling and the hesitant into God's work ('ut intelligamus vel celeriter mittendos ac vel invitos et contantes extrudendos in opus Dei').⁵⁶ He similarly opted for *extrudere* or *eiicere* in a note on *Luke* 10:2.⁵⁷ Thus in his edition of the New Testament, Erasmus retranslated the passage in Matthew and Luke: 'Rogate ergo Dominum messis, ut extrudat operarios in messem suam'.⁵⁸

Outside the *Annotations*, Canisius could have encountered the use of the verb *extrudere* in Erasmus's *Paraphrases on the New Testament*. When drawing up in 1544 the meagre catalogue of books of the first Jesuit community in Cologne, Canisius put an edition of the *Paraphrases* in two volumes at the top of his list.⁵⁹ The treatise on Mary reveals that he consulted both the *Annotations* and the *Paraphrases*, specifically Erasmus's exegesis of and paraphrastic commentary on Luke.⁶⁰ In the *Paraphrase on Luke*, Erasmus reproduced his translation, except that he substituted 'igitur' for 'ergo'.⁶¹ The *Paraphrase on Matthew* turns Jesus's statement into a rhetorical question and reflects Erasmus's reason in the *Annotations* for the appropriateness of *extrudere*: 'What therefore remains, except that you ask the Lord of the harvest to thrust labourers, even the reluctant and unwilling,

⁵⁶ ASD, VI-5, 184.803–805. A modern critical edition of the Vulgate reads at *Matthew* 9:38: 'rogate ergo dominum messis ut eiiciat operarios in messem suam'. See Gryson R. (ed.), *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart: 1994) 1539.

⁵⁷ ASD, VI-5, 534.359–362.

⁵⁸ LB, VI, 52D, 272C.

⁵⁹ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. I, 671.

⁶⁰ Printed *marginalia* in the second edition of the treatise refer to the *Annotations*. See Canisius Peter, *Alter tomus commentariorum de verbi Dei corruptelis, adversus novos et veteres Sectariorum errores. In eo libris quinque dissertur de Maria virgine incomparabili, et Dei genetrice sacrosancta* (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583) 23, 365. Although the reference on p. 23 lists only the *Annotations*, it is clear from Canisius's observations about Erasmus's comments on the genealogy of Mary and the kinship of Mary and Joseph that he had read Erasmus's notes on Luke. The *marginalium* on p. 365 expressly refers to Erasmus's notes on Luke and Mark. Marginal references to the *Paraphrase on Luke* already appeared in the first edition. See Canisius Peter, *De Maria virgine incomparabili et Dei genetrice sacrosancta libri quinque* (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1577) 209.

⁶¹ LB, VII, 374B.

into his harvest' ('Quid igitur superses, nisi ut rogetis Dominum messis, ut operarios etiam cessantes ac detrectantes extrudat in messem suam').⁶²

Late in life, Canisius retained the notion of urgency in Jesus' words while also preserving the traditional Vulgate reading. In his *Notae evangelicae* (1591–1593), meditations for preachers on the gospel pericopes appointed for the Sundays and feast days of the liturgical year, he uses both *mittere* and *extrudere*. On the feast of Saint Matthew (24 February), he recalls 'Christ's precept, necessary for all ages: "Ask the Lord of the harvest, that he send (*ut mittat*) workers into his harvest"'. The preacher resolves on the feast of Saints Peter and Paul (29 June) to pray earnestly 'that, when asked, the Lord of the harvest, as he himself commanded, may impel (*extrudat*) the necessary pastors and doctors' so that their labours may assist troubled churches against religious strife and against 'that new barbaric tyranny of impious heretics, which daily and increasingly afflicts and destroys Christendom'.⁶³

In his preface to the anthology of Jerome's letters, Canisius in effect portrays Erasmus as a tyrant or bully, but he never explicitly brands him a heretic. Of course, the association with Luther and a reputation for scepticism did not put him squarely in the camp of Catholic orthodoxy. The question of Erasmus's commitment to orthodoxy was related to the question of whether resolute Catholics would read him. Canisius impugned that commitment, and yet a withering criticism of Erasmus was clearly compatible with the practice of reading him.

The Problem of the Index

The appropriateness and permissibility of reading Erasmus was of great moment as Canisius prepared his anthology of Jerome. In 1559, the Roman Inquisition issued the first papal index of banned authors and forbidden books in the last year of the pontificate of Paul IV. The first category of proscribed authors prohibited the reading of all their books even if they did not deal with religion. The Index also forbade selected works of known and unknown authors, specific Latin and vernacular Bibles,

⁶² LB, VII, 58D.

⁶³ Streicher F. (ed.), *S. Petri Canisi doctoris ecclesiae Meditationes seu notae in evangelicas lectiones*, 3 vols. (2nd ed. Munich: 1957–1961), vol. III, 114, 219.

any publications produced by sixty-one named printers, and editions of Church Fathers prepared by heretics.⁶⁴

The ruthless nature of the Index alarmed book sellers and printers in the Papal States as well as authors and intellectuals, including Peter Canisius. An Italian scholar supposed that nobody would write anything except letters.⁶⁵ Canisius objected to the severity of the Index but was scrupulously determined to abide by it as long as it had the force of law.⁶⁶ Juan Alfonso Polanco, secretary to Diego Laínez, the Superior General of the Jesuits, informed Canisius at the end of July 1559 that the Society had petitioned Cardinal Michele Ghislieri, the Inquisitor General and the future Pope Pius V, for permission to read prohibited books, such as corrected and reprinted editions of Erasmus's *Copia* and *Adages*. In March 1560, Polanco assured Canisius that he need have no scruples about having sent to Munich Erasmus's *Copia* and other books from which the names of heretics had been erased.⁶⁷

Canisius's anxiety persisted. In April 1561, he asked Laínez three questions. First, could one read 'the works of Jerome, of Augustine, and of other Fathers and also of other good authors notwithstanding the commentaries and critical judgments of Erasmus, which sometimes contain comments against the teachings of the Church or certainly against common opinion'? In other words, could Canisius consult the patristic editions of Erasmus as well as his editions of classical authors? Second, was it necessary to undertake the 'highly onerous' task 'to erase everywhere the name of Erasmus and of similar authors'? Third, 'was it sufficient to expunge in the said commentaries the suspect or patently false passages from Erasmus and similar authors'? Polanco replied with answers on behalf of Laínez. The editions could be read notwithstanding the commentaries and the deletion of names was not necessary.⁶⁸ The third question received no response.

Did the papal proscription of Erasmus in 1559 influence Canisius's portrayal of the humanist and of his disciples in the preface to the anthology of Jerome? The only evidence that could support a connection between the prohibition of Erasmus and Canisius's reproaches is circumstantial. The timing was right. In 1561, the year in which he penned the preface to

⁶⁴ Wolf H., *Index: Der Vatikan und die verbotene Bücher* (Munich: 2006) 26–29.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, 29.

⁶⁶ Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* 464, 467.

⁶⁷ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. II, 485, 614.

⁶⁸ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. III, 114, 115; 125–126.

the anthology, Canisius was still worried about the permissibility of consulting Erasmus's edition of Jerome. His reproof of Erasmus might function as a form of self-defence. He rhetorically constructs his evaluation of Erasmus in the preface as a response to a request for his opinion about the humanist, which turns out to be trenchantly negative. Of course, Canisius at the same time could have criticized Erasmus in support of the advertisement of the merits of his anthology. Self-defence may have combined nicely with self-promotion.

The Index of the Council of Trent, published in 1564, brought less clarity to the question of the permissibility to read Erasmus. The new Index did not invalidate the Index of 1559. It confusingly listed Erasmus twice, first under 'D' for Desiderius among authors of the second class and then under 'E' for Erasmus among authors of the first class. 'Inclusion in the second class', Silvana Seidel Menchi explained, '[...] amounted to an absolution. The second class listed single works written by authors who had occasionally fallen into error'. To appear within the first class, which prohibited all works of an author, 'meant that Erasmus was among the authors intended to be erased from Catholic cultural memory'.⁶⁹ The reference to Desiderius Erasmus as an author of the second class is remarkably comprehensive, however. The entry begins by prohibiting the *Colloquies*, *Praise of Folly*, *Lingua*, the treatise on marriage *Christiani matrimonii institutio*, a treatise on fasting *De interdicto esu cranium*, and an Italian translation of the *Paraphrase on Matthew*. Other works that deal with religion ought to be prohibited until the faculty of theology at the University of Paris or of Leuven expurgates them. The tone then changes from prohibition to permission. The edition of the *Adages* under preparation by Paolo Manuzio was permitted. Finally, in the meantime, any publications were permitted from which 'suspect passages' had been deleted 'by any faculty of theology of a Catholic university or any general inquisition'.⁷⁰

In 1577, Canisius interpreted Erasmus's status as a suspect author with this awkward sentence:

Since the Index of the Church (*censura Ecclesiastica*), which among the orthodox is indeed authoritative and must be especially authoritative, has forbidden with a few exceptions the reading of Erasmus's writings, and for

⁶⁹ Seidel Menchi S., "Whether to Remove Erasmus from the Index of Prohibited Books: Debates in the Roman Curia, 1570–1610", *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 20 (2000) 20.

⁷⁰ *Index librorum prohibitorum, cum regulis confectis per Patres a Tridentina Synodo delectos* (Cologne, Maternus Cholinus: 1564) fol. B8r.

the most serious reasons, even if it did not condemn him as an author, it still has rejected his works as hindrances, instead of benefits, to readers.⁷¹

Canisius must have been inclined to think of Erasmus as an author of the second, not of the first, class since he believed that the Index did not condemn him as an author, and yet he considers the prohibition of Erasmus's works almost universal. The 'most serious reasons' for censorship seem more utilitarian than theological.

Canisius's Evaluation of Erasmus in De Maria virgine

Canisius's awkward sentence appeared in his enormous treatise in five books on the Virgin Mary, *De Maria virgine incomparabili et Dei genetrice sacrosancta libri quinque* (1577). Canisius devoted most of Chapter 10 in Book 5 to Erasmus, the final portion to Johannes Oecolampadius (d. 1531), the Reformer of Basel. The title, as it relates to Erasmus, reads: 'How we should evaluate Erasmus of Rotterdam, who in our age was assuredly the first to spread in his writings criticisms of the praises and titles of the Blessed Virgin and also on the contrary still adorned and even invoked her with splendid titles'.⁷²

A complex long general comment opened the chapter:

Not fifty years have passed since Erasmus's death. In his own time and among scholars of brilliant discernment, he was certainly a man who everywhere enjoyed great renown. For it is impossible to deny that in him resided a charming and very agreeable intellect, a unique proficiency in Latin and Greek, an extensive erudition, a wonderful capacity for and abundance in writing, and indeed, for that era, an uncommon and admirable eloquence. But just as his labour and learning conferred tremendous benefit on many by promoting the study of the humanities and by liberating it from barbarism, so, on the contrary, if we are to speak candidly, he caused tremendous inconvenience both to himself and to others in matters of the Christian religion and those that pertain to theology. To be sure, he availed himself of and taught others this excessive liberty in passing judgment on, or rather in both undermining and embroiling in controversy, the writings of the Fathers, the laws of the Church, the opinions of theologians, and public ceremonies.

Therefore, what the ancients customarily said about that clever man Philo – 'either Philo speaks like Plato or Plato like Philo' – this in the end very many people applied also to Erasmus, declaring: 'Either Erasmus speaks

⁷¹ Canisius, *De Maria virgine* (1577) 601.

⁷² Ibidem, 600.

like Luther or Luther like Erasmus' (*Aut Erasmus Lutherizat, aut Lutherus Erasmizat*). And yet, we must say, if we would like to render an honest judgment, that Erasmus and Luther were very different. Erasmus always remained a Catholic. Luther did not only manifestly forsake the Catholic Church, but he also impiously attacked it and emerged as the wellspring of many sects. As Orosius said of Julian, Erasmus criticized religion 'with craft rather than with force', often applying considerable caution and moderation to either his own opinions or errors. Luther, fierce, tempestuous, fiery and factious by nature, went beyond all bounds. He hurried headlong to extremes with such arrogance that he yielded to nobody, with such unbending stubbornness in his views that he often seemed intolerable even to his own supporters. Finally, he burned with such hatred for the Church that he undertook everything to bring about its destruction in open battle and with the utmost rage. Erasmus passed judgment on what he thought required censure and correction in the teaching of theologians and in the Church. And furthermore he either deliberately or imprudently played the part of Momos to such an extent that at the same time he opened wide the window for Luther and others to change everything in religion and to stir up the turmoil that we now perceive as having had especially bad consequences for Christendom. We cannot deplore this enough. As a result many have begun to grasp this: Where Erasmus hinted at something, acting obviously in jest or in all seriousness, there Luther rushed on ahead; whatever eggs the former laid, the latter finally hatched.⁷³

In some respects Canisius has changed his tune about Erasmus in the chapter's opening remarks. The rebarbative pseudo-theologian of the preface to the selection of Jerome's letters has now won the plaudits of scholars and universal respect. A ruthlessly combative Erasmus has become a more cautious and moderate Erasmus, who 'criticized religion "with craft rather than force"'. Here Canisius borrows from the assessment of Julian the Apostate by Paulus Orosius in his *History against the Pagans* (7.30). Canisius transforms the stern and prickly neo-Aristarchus into a paragon of erudition possessed of 'a charming and very agreeable intellect' ('ingenium lepidum et periucundum'). Yet he revises this positive assessment later in the chapter when he notes that Erasmus was often influenced by a wit that was not good, especially when he 'openly made fun of very many ecclesiastical rituals, and even the Virgin mother and other saints'.⁷⁴

A hint of continuity endures within the discontinuity, however. Canisius's new appreciation for Erasmus's charm does not obliterate the less endearing characteristic of fault-finding, unmistakable in the preface.

⁷³ Ibidem, 600–601.

⁷⁴ Ibidem, 603.

Erasmus played the part of Momos, 'fault-finding personified',⁷⁵ although Canisius cannot decide whether he acted out of deliberation or from a lack of discretion.

The revised Erasmus does not escape censure. Canisius points to the 'excessive liberty' with which Erasmus upended theology. Clearly his caution and moderation were far from perfect. Later in the chapter, Canisius repeats familiar criticisms. Erasmus was 'another Lucian'. Some of his colloquies 'easily corrupt good people'.⁷⁶ As an afterthought to his criticisms of Erasmus's treatment of Mary, Canisius revives the old accusations of belligerence and scepticism:

For in this respect it was too much his habit to make assertions about sacred subjects with insufficient constancy and seriousness. Especially when it came to speaking his views on many subjects, he was moved more by hatred of the scholastics and monks than by love of the unadulterated truth. Indeed, it also happens in his case what is customarily said with good reason, namely that truth is lost by excessive disputing. And the more he constantly exonerates himself and his writings and also engages in equivocation, the less credibility and esteem he wins for himself among scholars, especially since he seemed to pursue in many respects a Pyrrhonic theology.⁷⁷

In 1561, Canisius maintained that Erasmus wanted to pursue a theology of scepticism; in 1577, he moderated this statement by reporting that he 'appeared to pursue' such a theology.

The juxtaposition of Erasmus and Luther reveals the mutability and ambivalence in Canisius's evaluation of Erasmus. Canisius adduces the popular saying that by 1522 had attained the currency of print:⁷⁸ *Aut Erasmus Lutherizat, aut Lutherus Erasmizat*. In a letter of 1546 to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, grandson of Pope Paul III (1534–1549), the Bishop of Milopotamos on Crete, Dionisio de Zannettini, after repudiating the *Colloquies* as 'highly dangerous' and advocating a 'general prohibition' of Erasmus's works, asserted: 'This Erasmus was the instigator (*il fomento*) of Luther, and all that Erasmus called into question in the *Annotations on the New Testament* the said Luther confirmed and boldly expanded so that

⁷⁵ Rose, H.J. – Ruston, J.S., "Momos", in Hornblower S. – Spawforth A. (eds.), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: 1996) 994.

⁷⁶ Canisius, *De Maria virgine* (1577) 603.

⁷⁷ Canisius, *De Maria virgine* (1577) 601–602.

⁷⁸ Rummel E., *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics*, 2 vols. (Niewkoop: 1989), vol. II, 1. I thank Kathy Eden for pointing me to this reference.

this proverb is most true: *Aut Luther erasmizat, aut Erasmus lutherizat*.⁷⁹ According to the journal of Gabriele Paleotti, an observer at the Council of Trent, Zannettini's rambling speech on 30 January 1562 at a general congregation on the Index of Forbidden Books, made him first a laughing stock and then an object of pity. The bishop began by attacking 'Luther, Erasmus, Melancthon and certain others, adding *aut Erasmus lutherizat aut Lutherus erasmizat*'.⁸⁰ Canisius seems to reject the validity of the saying. Many might repeat it, but 'Erasmus and Luther were very different'. At first the Catholic, cautious, and moderate Erasmus serves as a foil for the violent and spiteful deserter of the Catholic Church. Soon enough, however, Canisius yokes the two 'very different' men together. The Erasmus who deplorably opened wide the window for Luther resembles the Erasmus whom Zannettini accused of fomenting Luther. If Canisius questioned the applicability of what Zannettini called 'a most true proverb', he expressed his agreement more forcefully than in his preface to Jerome's letters with the common saying that Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched.

Patient readers of the vast treatise on Mary might have been bemused by Canisius's opening strategy to separate Erasmus and Luther in Book 5, Chapter 10 since he had earlier paired them for good and for ill. Mary's immaculate conception is the theme of Book 1, Chapter 8. Canisius entitles the chapter 'The pure conception of Mary dishonorably subverted by the sectarians but defended by Luther and Erasmus'. After rehearsing the opinions of Protestant thinkers such as John Calvin, Johannes Brentz, and the Magdeburg Centuriators, Canisius 'with abundant justification' sets up against them Luther, their 'common father and teacher, who lent support to the unblemished conception of the Virgin'. 'But Erasmus too', Canisius adds, 'agrees with Luther'. After supplying evidence from Luther and recalling the Protestant 'scourges of Mary' (*Mariomastigae*) who 'scandalously snarl at Mary's holy conception', Canisius continues: 'It remains that we should also bring forward Erasmus, hardly a common witness against them and highly approved by the Reformers (*a nouatoribus*), regardless of how in many ways, as we discuss elsewhere, he was not afraid to treat

⁷⁹ The letter appears in an appendix of documents in Buschbell G., *Reformation und Inquisition in Italien um die Mitte des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn: 1910) 254–256, quotation on 255. On Dionisio de Zannettini, see *ibidem*, 37–39.

⁸⁰ *Concilium Tridentinum: diariorum, actorum, epistularum, tractatum nova collectio*, 13 vols. in 19 (Freiburg i. Br.: 1901–2001), vol. III, 252. Perhaps Canisius and Zannettini rubbed shoulders at Trent. They both spoke in June 1562 at discussions on the Eucharist: the latter in two general congregations (6 and 30 June), the former at a congregation of theologians on 15 June. See *Concilium Tridentinum*, vol. VIII, 532, 557–558, 638–639.

Mary severely and injuriously'. Three passages from Erasmus's *Apology* (1531) against an Italian critic, Alberto Pio, and two invocations from the *Paeon Virgini Matri dicendus*, a prayer to Mary that Erasmus wrote 1499, support Canisius's contention that Erasmus acknowledged Mary's immaculate conception.⁸¹

In Chapter 2 of Book 4, Canisius again combines Erasmus and Luther. The title of the chapter reads: 'On the sublime and also perfect faith of Mary against Luther, and that she fully acknowledged Christ as God at the time of his birth, however much Erasmus might equivocate'. Canisius proposes to vindicate Mary's faith especially against Luther and Erasmus. After criticizing Luther, he moves on to Erasmus, describing him as someone 'who too often thinks like Luther (*Lutherizat*)'. He is astounded that Erasmus 'writes that it is not clear to him whether the divinity of Christ had been perfectly revealed to the Lord's Mother at the birth and during the infancy of her son'. Canisius relates that, when admonished by the Faculty of Theology in Paris, Erasmus maintained: 'Nowhere in fact do we read that Christ, when he was an infant, had been worshipped as God either by Mary or by Joseph'. Here he quotes from Erasmus's *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae sub nomine facultatis theologiae Parisiensis vulgatas* (1532).⁸²

When he remembers Erasmus, Canisius scatters praise and blame throughout the treatise on Mary. After promising to explain how to read the Fathers when they seem to doubt 'Mary's perfection and innocence', he writes that Erasmus also doubted this but revised his opinion and 'openly declared' his preference for the opinion of those Fathers 'who maintain that Mary was free of every sin'. Erasmus appears at the end of a list of several authorities who asserted Mary's perpetual virginity: Gregory of Nyssa, Amphilochius, Ambrose, Leo the Great, John Damascene, Fulgentius, Eusebius of Emessa, Vincent of Lérins, and Bernard of Clairvaux. Erasmus discerns 'that this very doctrine pleases him, and he candidly professes that it seems to be more pious'. A marginal reference points readers to Erasmus's commentary on Prudentius's hymn on the birth of Jesus. Canisius prominently offers Erasmus as an authority for the position that

the Catholic confession concerning Mary ever virgin belongs to those teachings which depend not on the authority of Scripture but on the definition of the Church. And given that they are handed down to us by the supreme

⁸¹ Canisius, *De Maria virgine* (1577) 52, 56, 57, 58. The passages that Canisius quotes may be found in LB, IX, 1163E, 1165C, D; LB, V, 1230B, 1230D–E.

⁸² Canisius, *De Maria virgine* (1577) 362, 365, 367. For the quotation from the *Declarationes*, see LB, IX, 914B.

consensus of the Fathers, we are obliged, he says, to believe them no less than if they were expressed in Scripture.

In a chapter on the cult of the Virgin of Loreto, Canisius recalls Erasmus's devotion to her, the liturgy he composed in her honour 'to the consternation of the Reformers' (*invitis Nouatoribus*), and the approbation of the liturgy by the Archbishop of Besançon.⁸³

Canisius can distinguish Erasmus from Protestant leaders, but he can also associate him with them when he censures Erasmus. He was 'the first of the Reformers' (*e nouatoribus primus*) to think that as Christ grew with age he gradually acquired the powers of the soul instead of possessing them perfectly from birth.⁸⁴ 'Among many other and scandalous errors' Canisius considers two claims: first, that her virginity brings no merit to Mary, and second, that she did not merit to be the mother of God. After mentioning Luther, 'the distorter and oppressor of all merits', and the Zwinglian theologian Franz Lambert (1487–1530), Canisius proceeds to Erasmus. He accuses him of distorting Mary's acknowledgement that 'God has considered the lowliness of his handmaid' (Luke 1:48) to exclude her merit and of saying 'reluctantly (*aegre*) that Mary deserved to become the mother of God as if this ought to be attributed only to divine favour'.⁸⁵

A marginal reference reveals the source of Canisius's displeasure about Erasmus's reluctance to affirm Mary's maternal merit: the *Paraphrase on Luke*. When Mary agrees to the divine plan, announced by Gabriel, for her to bear Jesus (Luke 1:38), Erasmus has her say: 'consequently, there is no reason that I should claim either merit or favour for myself; all will be due to God's goodness, all will be due to God's power'. God's handmaid realizes that all will pronounce her 'most blessed' (*felicissima*) and reflects: 'Indeed we can be truly called blessed (*felices*) inasmuch as this is conferred upon us not by our work, not by our merits, but by the spontaneous favour of God'.⁸⁶

Passages from Erasmus's colloquy *Peregrinatio religionis ergo* and from his *Enchiridion militis chrisitani* offended Canisius deeply. He felt that Erasmus's spiteful criticisms of the abuses of pilgrims were unjustified. The abuses were evident only 'in a few' and were insignificant. The result, nevertheless, was that 'this absurd and acerbic teacher of the youth was

⁸³ Canisius, *De Maria virgine* (1577) 71, 163–164, 214, 775.

⁸⁴ Ibidem, 336.

⁸⁵ Ibidem, 209. On Lambert, see Müller G., "Lambert, Franz", in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* (Berlin: 1953–), vol. VIII, 435–437.

⁸⁶ LB, VII, 291A, 292D.

bound to open the window for the raging sectarians and to pave the way, as it were, for the complete rejection and ridicule of this most ancient and therefore most esteemed custom of the Church'.⁸⁷

In the chapter on evaluating Erasmus, Canisius launches a recital of offences against 'the pious' whereby Erasmus 'did not hesitate to attack the honour due the mother of God and to injure her openly'. Canisius recalls the fictitious letter of Mary to Glaucoplutus, a follower of Luther, that Erasmus composed for the colloquy *Perigrinatio ergo religionis*. The letter, an instance of Erasmus's 'egregious insolence and insolent impiety',⁸⁸ exasperated Canisius. Erasmus caused offence by having Mary commend Luther for arguing that praying to the saints was unnecessary. What could be more shameful or more scandalous than to present Mary as supporting 'the declared enemies of the Church, of whom Luther today is the leader'? Erasmus gave offence 'in the same letter' by rejecting 'very many prayers that were conceived of sincerely and piously' as men and women asked both Mary and the other saints to intercede for them with God. Without identifying it, Canisius proceeds to another colloquy, *Naufragium*, as the target of his outrage, when he criticizes Erasmus for laughing at sailors for their various invocations of Mary – *Salve Regina*, *Stella maris*, *Regina coeli*, *Domina mundi*, *Porta salutis* ('Hail, Queen; Star of the Sea; Queen of Heaven; Lady of the World; Gate of Salvation') – that 'have been celebrated by the universal Church for so many centuries by now'. Canisius takes offence because Erasmus 'substitutes the virgin mother of Christ – it is shameful to say – with Venus in the superintendence of the sea'. Two further objections conclude the list of offences. First, Erasmus considers the way that many embrace the cult of the Virgin as superstitious and as injurious to Christ, as if they look to Mary more than Christ for help. Canisius thinks that this sort of devotion is highly unlikely. Finally, Erasmus 'clearly confirms the error of those who want the holy Virgin to be regarded as infected not only by original but also by actual sin, just as the sectarians now indeed scandalously affirm'.⁸⁹

Canisius's recriminations depend in part on selective readings of Erasmus. In the letter to Glaucoplutus, the Erasmian Mary offers thanks for the argument about the futility of the invocation of the saints and complains that she has almost been exhausted by the repugnant requests for

⁸⁷ Canisius, *De Maria virgine* (1577) 716.

⁸⁸ Ibidem, 603.

⁸⁹ Ibidem, 601.

help that she receives. But she complains at the end of the letter of a decline in respect and of the removal of the saints from churches. She defiantly insists:

But you shall not expel me, however defenseless I may be, unless at the same time you also expel the son, whom I hold in my arms. I will not allow myself to be torn away from him. Either you drive him out along with me or you let us both stay, unless you prefer to have a church without Christ.⁹⁰

In *Naufragium*, Adolphus repeats the invocations of Mary in the songs of desperate sailors, noting that Scripture nowhere attributes these titles to her. He also says: 'Once Venus took care of sailors, for she was believed to be born from the sea. Since she apparently has failed in her solicitude, the Virgin Mother has replaced this mother who is not a virgin'. Antonius protests: 'You are joking'. Adolphus in turn claims that some sailors worship and invoke the sea. Antonius calls this a 'ridiculous superstition'.⁹¹ Canisius has reversed the order. Mary in the colloquy replaces Venus, not *vice versa*. Furthermore, Erasmus has not lapsed into paganism. His interlocutors speak of sailors' superstitions. Erasmus obviously found them repellant. Most bizarrely, Canisius in the last book of the treatise accuses Erasmus of abetting the Protestant rejection of the doctrine of the immaculate conception after employing Erasmus in the first book as a witness to the doctrine against the Protestants!

Canisius returns to *Naufragium* to contest the assumption that only scriptural titles are appropriate for Mary. He reasons that if the simple titles in Scripture do not take anything away from 'the majesty of Christ the Lord', then the simple references to Mary in the Bible do not diminish her 'extraordinary gifts'. Thus 'she should not be cheated of the illustrious titles of which the Church approves'. If 'the piety of Erasmus' will not permit any titles except those expressly used in Scripture to be applied to Mary, why does he not refrain from ascribing many things to Jesus and Mary that lack any scriptural warrant and that have earned the censure of scholars? A printed marginal note summarizes: 'Erasmus, especially when he acts as a paraphrast on the Gospels, asserts many things about Christ without and against the Scriptures'. Among several examples, Canisius quotes from Erasmus's embellishment of Jesus's reply to Mary (John 2: 4) at the wedding of Cana in the *Paraphrase on John*:

⁹⁰ ASD, I-3, 473.80–82, 474.123–126 (quotation).

⁹¹ ASD, I-3, 327.71–74, 76–85.

So far I have demonstrated obedience to your will. What now remains must be done in accordance with the decision of the Father, not with a human command. Formerly (*alibi*) you were my mother. From now on, to me you will be nothing other than a woman as often as I am engaged in the Father's affairs.

'Where does he read', Canisius wonders, 'that Christ remonstrated so severely with his mother'?⁹²

At the end of his long evaluation of Erasmus, Canisius ceases hostilities and turns to praise. He acknowledges that there are other passages 'in which he thinks and also speaks much more correctly and besides very reverently about the cult of Mary'.⁹³ Which did Erasmus do more: disparage or speak well of Mary? Canisius replies: 'I would have almost said that he was not so much a prominent scourge as an encomiast of Mary'.⁹⁴ In the *Paeon Virgini matri dicendus*, another long prayer entitled *Obsecratio ad Mariam in rebus adversis*, the liturgy in honour of the Virgin of Loreto, and 'in many other writings, he praised (*commendavit*) the Mother of God most abundantly and most genuinely'. Canisius quotes from the *Paeon*, the *Obsecratio*, and the liturgy to prove that Erasmus praised and greeted Mary, acknowledged her as his intercessor, and invoked her. He, for example, acclaimed her in the *Paeon* as 'the venerable queen of heaven and earth'.⁹⁵ In the second edition of the treatise, he adds two excerpts from the prayer to Mary in Erasmus's prayer book, *Precationes aliquot novae*, to illustrate his respect for Mary.⁹⁶ Erasmus's poems to St. Anne, Mary's mother, and to St. Geneviève show that he committed himself to 'their trustworthy patronage'. Therefore, Canisius's 'opponents are not justified in boasting that Erasmus is on their side and in setting him against us when it comes to Mary, since they can hardly point out to us any other author of this era, whom they esteem, more favourably disposed and devoted to Mary, more distinguished in speaking about her dignity'. In other words, Protestant *Mariomastigae* may not look to Erasmus for support. His devotion to Mary contradicts his reluctant toleration of applying to Mary titles not found in the Bible and his apparent opinion about the futility of prayers to the saints. We can easily forgive

⁹² Canisius, *De Maria virgine* (1577) 602. For the passage in the *Paraphrase on John*, see LB, VII, 515B.

⁹³ Canisius, *De Maria virgine* (1577) 603.

⁹⁴ Ibidem, 603–604.

⁹⁵ Ibidem, 604. For the quotation from the *Paeon*, see LB, V, 1228E.

⁹⁶ Canisius, *De Maria virgine* (1583) 663.

the illogical adherence to certain opinions in the habitually inconsistent Erasmus since he later changed his mind, deeply regretting the reckless comments he had made in his books as well as his advocacy of a spiritual liberty that those who championed the liberty of the gospel turned into an occasion for the 'unrestrained license of the flesh'.⁹⁷

If Canisius was willing to forgive, he would not forget Erasmus's faults as he abandons him to a confessional wilderness. He feels he has said enough against Erasmus, 'who was the first to instigate the dispute, or rather the complaint, about the cult of Mary in our day and who in his writings excoriated with ample recklessness and even hatred the practice and also custom of the ancient Church'. Canisius concludes:

Thus it seems that by the wonderful judgment of God it has come about that he, who, as if limping with both feet, wished to please now this and now that party, in the end satisfied neither party and that a previously stellar personality (*summus habitus*) preserves for himself both among Catholics and also among the friends of the new religion a nearly equal, that is negligible, authority and, moreover, good will.⁹⁸

Conclusion

Erasmus commanded little admiration from Canisius's confrères in the Society of Jesus. Although Ignatius never enjoined all Jesuits to refrain from reading Erasmus under all circumstances, he forbade the use of Erasmus's pedagogical works as text books in Jesuit schools, especially in the Collegio Romano. Nevertheless these works found their way into the curriculum at other Jesuit schools.⁹⁹ Alfonso Salmerón (1515–1585) read Erasmus's *Paraphrases* closely, but in his own commentary on the New Testament 'he could not bring himself to say a good word about Erasmus and took every possible occasion to criticize his exegesis'. He chided Erasmus for remaining neutral in religious controversies.¹⁰⁰ Antonio Possevino (1533/1534–1611), who championed Canisius's catechisms in Piedmont and Savoy, 'launched a virulent attack on Erasmus'.¹⁰¹

A marginal note in Possevino's brief *Iudicium de Desiderio Erasmo*, coming at the end of an attack against French politiques, points readers to

⁹⁷ Canisius, *De Maria virgine* (1577) 604.

⁹⁸ Ibidem.

⁹⁹ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* 261–262.

¹⁰⁰ Ibidem, 263 (quotation), 264.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem, 125, 264 (quotation).

Canisius's *Opus Marianum* for more commentary on Erasmus.¹⁰² Whereas Canisius affirmed and denied Erasmus's association with Luther, Possevino stridently asserted it. While many 'licked the feces' of Erasmus's opinions, Luther 'also swallowed' them. The commonplaces about the two were justified: 'Erasmus hints (*innuit*), Luther rushes ahead (*irruit*); Erasmus lays the eggs, Luther hatches the chicks; Erasmus hesitates, Luther asserts; either Erasmus speaks like Luther or Luther speaks like Erasmus'.¹⁰³ Among his other demerits, Erasmus paved the way for the neo-Arians of Transylvania and filled his *Paraphrases* and patristic editions with errors.¹⁰⁴

Canisius could not discard Erasmus completely, even though he shared many of the visceral reservations of his fellow Jesuits. Ambivalence, not unwavering animosity, characterized his approach to Erasmus. He proudly aimed to liberate Jerome from earlier large editions but then referred readers to the most famous of them all without mentioning Erasmus. In the preface to his anthology of Jerome, he launched a withering attack on Erasmus after displaying a remarkably Erasmian appreciation of Jerome. The supposedly baleful influence of Erasmus's books did not deter Canisius from consulting them and appreciating at least something of what he read in them. He divided the Catholic Erasmus from the rebellious Luther, and he joined them. He allied Erasmus with the Catholic cause against Protestants and put him in the Protestant camp. After rehearsing the many ways in which Erasmus offended Catholic beliefs about and devotion to Mary, Canisius managed not only to think of Erasmus as more of a friend than a foe of Mary but also, bizarrely, to suggest that Erasmus was still the most distinguished voice in honour of Mary. Then he remembered that Erasmus was responsible for stirring up the controversy about Mary in the first place.

Erasmus defied consistent categorization and engendered confusion in the mind of Canisius. He was worthy of both praise and blame. Canisius would not gladly live with the Erasmian heritage, but he could not easily live without it. His ambivalence is arguably a more appropriate response to the complexity of that heritage than uncritical adulation or uncompromising censure. In exchange for tolerating the Church, Erasmus hoped the Church would tolerate him. In some measure, Canisius fulfilled the expectation.

¹⁰² Possevino Antonio, *Iudicium de Nuae militis Galli, Ioannis Bodini, Philippi Mor-naei, & Nicolae Machiaueli* (Lyon, Jean-Baptiste Buysson: 1593) 340; Crahay, "Le procès d'Érasme" 116.

¹⁰³ Possevino, *Iudicium* 338.

¹⁰⁴ Ibidem, 338, 339.

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PART III

POLITICAL IDEAS:
IRENISM AND *MIRROR OF A CHRISTIAN PRINCE*

ERASMIAN IRENISM IN THE POETRY OF PIERRE DE RONSARD

Philip Ford†

Erasmus's rejection of war and the horrors that it caused needs little elaboration, as the subject has attracted much scholarly interest over the years.¹ The impact of his views may be seen in French humanist circles early in the sixteenth century, with the 1525 adage "Dulce bellum inexpertis" constituting one of the most devastating critiques of warfare to have been written. In many ways, Rabelais's narration of the war between Grandgousier and Picrochole in *Gargantua* (1534) is an illustration of the dangers of war and the proper conduct of a Christian prince as set out by Erasmus in this most important of adages.

Rabelais's links with Erasmus are easy to establish,² not least because he corresponded with the Dutch humanist, and clearly makes use of his adages in his works.³ In the case of Ronsard, however, it is not immediately obvious to what extent he would have been exposed to Erasmian ideas. His serious education, particularly under the famous Hellenist Jean Dorat, began relatively late: Ronsard was twenty when, in 1544, Dorat joined the household of Lazare de Baïf, in which he himself was already living, to act as tutor to his illegitimate son Jean-Antoine, aged twelve at the time. Dorat was responsible for Ronsard's initiation into Greek literature, especially poetry, and he clearly made rapid progress in this area.⁴

¹ See the study, for example, of Adams R.P., *The Better Part of Valor: More, Erasmus, Colet, and Vives, on Humanism, War, and Peace, 1496–1535* (Seattle: 1962), and Margolin J.-C., *Guerre et Paix dans la pensée d'Erasme* (Paris: 1973).

² See also the contribution by Paul J. Smith in this volume.

³ See, for example, Rabelais's letter to Erasmus, dated Lyon, 30 November 1532, in which he refers to the Dutch humanist as 'pater mi humanissime' (my most kindly father), and speaks of his veneration of him; in Rabelais François, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. M. Huchon (Paris: 1994) 998–999. The prologue to *Gargantua* begins with a reference to the 'Sileni Alcibiadis' adage, *Œuvres complètes* 5–6.

⁴ Ronsard famously alludes to his poetic apprenticeship under Dorat in the "Hymne de l'Autonne", where he speaks of how 'de là je vins estre / Disciple de d'Aurat, qui long temps fut mon maistre, / M'aprist la Poësie, & me montra comment / On doit feindre & cacher les fables proprement' (from that time I became a pupil of Dorat, who for a long time was my teacher, taught me poetry, and showed me how to create fictions and conceal myths appropriately); see Ronsard Pierre de, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. P. Laumonier, 20 vols. (Paris: 1924–75), vol. XII, 50.

His Latin would probably already have been good, though he had been educated at home and then, briefly, at the Collège de Navarre in Paris, which he attended at the age of nine.

Ronsard's interest in Greek may well have taken him to the *Adages*, and the suspicion in which Erasmus was held in conservative circles in France in the middle years of the sixteenth century, as elsewhere in Europe, is unlikely to have concerned him, though Erasmus's works were all placed on the Index of Paul IV in 1559.⁵ The Laumonier edition of Ronsard lists Erasmus as a source for the poet 37 times, in many cases only for relatively general commonplaces inspired by the *Adages*.⁶ However, more recent editions, including the two-volume Pléiade edition,⁷ contain more precise references to Erasmus's works in the notes, and an article of 1932 on the "Continuation du discours des miseres de ce temps" cites Erasmus's *Epistola ad Noviomagum* as a source for much of this poem.⁸ The author of this article, Henri Franchet, suggests with some plausibility that Ronsard may have been introduced to Erasmian thinking through frequenting the humanist circle associated with Jean de Morel and his wife Antoinette Deloynes. Both Morel and Antoinette's father, François Deloynes, had been well known to Erasmus, and the principal members of the group, including the French Chancellor, Michel de L'Hospital, tended to occupy the centre ground in matters of religion.⁹

At first sight, however, Ronsard may not appear to be the most obvious exponent of Erasmian ideas on peace, given his status as a court poet, his constant search for patronage, and the nationalistic aims in his poetry as typified by the unfinished epic poem *La Franciade*. Nevertheless, beneath what may seem to be a promonarchical surface, his poetry often shows an independence of thought and dislike of war which is rather closer to Erasmus's opinions than may have been comfortable for the ruling parties in France. In this paper, then, I should like to examine some poems by

⁵ For an assessment of Erasmus's influence on French writers in the second half of the sixteenth century, see Hutton J., "Erasmus and France: the Propaganda for Peace", *Studies in the Renaissance* 8 (1961) 103–127. See 106 on the censorship of Erasmus.

⁶ Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. XX, 91.

⁷ Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, édition établie, présentée et annotée par Jean Céard, Daniel Ménager et Michel Simonin, 2 vols. (Paris: 1993–1994).

⁸ See Franchet H., "Erasmus et Ronsard: la lettre 'Contra quosdam qui se falso jactant evangelicos' et les 'Discours des Miseres de ce temps'", *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France* 39 (1932) 321–338.

⁹ On the Morel household, their connections with Erasmus, and their patronage of the Pléiade poets, see my article "An Early French Renaissance Salon: The Morel Household", *Renaissance and Reformation. Renaissance et Réforme* 28 (2004) 9–20.

Ronsard which demonstrate not only his commitment to peace but also the Erasmian principles that underlie them.

Before doing so, however, it will be instructive to recall some of the main elements of Erasmus's diatribe against war in the "Dulce bellum" adage.¹⁰ Probably, the strongest message that comes across is the inappropriateness of war between Christians, for whom war should be the antithesis of what Christ came down to earth to teach:

Belligeramur assidue, gens cum gente colliditur, regnum cum regno, civitas cum civitate, princeps cum principe, populus cum populo, et – quod ethnici quoque fatentur impium – affinis cum affini, cognatus cum cognato, frater cum fratre, filius cum patre; denique – quod ego sane puto his omnibus atrocius – Christianus cum homine; addam invitus – quod est atrocissimum – Christianus cum Christiano.¹¹

We are continually at war, race against race, kingdom against kingdom, city against city, prince against prince, people against people, and (the heathen themselves admit this to be wicked) relation against relation, brother against brother, son against father; finally, a thing which in my opinion is worse than these, Christians fight against men; reluctantly I must add, and this is the very worst of all, Christians fight Christians.

He is even reluctant to sanction war against the Turks,¹² who had become a popular focus of aggression throughout western Europe since their occupation of Athens in 1456. Feelings against them intensified after Erasmus's death with their invasion of Hungary and seizing of Buda in 1541. He considers war to be something which is entirely inconsistent with the human condition since, of all the animals, 'Solum hominem nudum produxit, imbecillum, tenerum, inermem, mollissima carne, cute levi'.¹³ It is rulers who are largely responsible for initiating wars in their own interests, though they should be the ones who try to repress it.¹⁴

Erasmus particularly focuses on the devastation caused by war, both to the combatants themselves, most of whom have little choice but to be thrust into killing and being killed, and to the civilian population, who

¹⁰ For the English translation of this adage, I use the text of Margaret Mann Phillips in *Erasmus on his Times: A Shortened Version of the 'Adages' of Erasmus* (Cambridge: 1967; repr. 1980). The Latin text is taken from Erasmus, *Opera omnia* II. 7 (Amsterdam: 1999, henceforth abbr. ASD).

¹¹ ASD II. 7, 21; Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 116.

¹² Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 133 and 136.

¹³ 'Only man was produced naked, weak, tender, unarmed, with very soft flesh and smooth skin', ASD II. 7, 14; Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 108.

¹⁴ Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 108, 116, 138.

are even more the victims of violence. He evokes 'the slaughtered lying in heaps, the fields running with gore, the rivers dyed with human blood' as well as 'the trampled crops, the burnt-out farms, the villages set on fire, the cattle driven away, the girls raped, and the old men carried off captive, the churches sacked, robbery, pillage, violence and confusion everywhere':

congestas strages, undantes cruore campos, fluuios humano tinctos sanguine [...] protritas passim segetes, exustas villas, incensos pagos, abacta pecora, constupratas virgines, tractos in captivitatē senes, direpta phana, latrociniis, praedationibus, violentia plena confusaque omnia.¹⁵

He cites in this respect Virgil's description of 'Bellona crack[ing] her furious whip; wicked Rage, breaking all bonds, flies up with bloody face, hideous to see'.¹⁶ On a number of occasions in the essay, *enargeia* is used to suggest the real horrors of war and the negatively transformative effect it has on men.¹⁷ Inspired no doubt by Homer's description of the shield of Achilles (*Iliad* 18 478–608), with its two contrasting cities, one at peace, the other at war, he presents his own contrast, emphasising the benefits of concord and law in the one, and the ravages of discord and lawlessness in the other.¹⁸ The cumulative picture which he builds up in this adage is graphic and devastating, and it is hardly surprising that "Dulce bellum inexpertis" should have had such a widespread effect on its readers.

Of course, Erasmus did not limit his remarks on this vital topic to the one adage. "Spartam nactus es, hanc orna" focuses on the role of the prince in 'preserving public liberty, fostering peace, and cutting out crime', rather than 'coveting the dominions of others',¹⁹ and in so doing, it presents examples of those who were persuaded to undertake wars of conquest and who, as a result, came to an unfortunate end: Charles VIII and Louis XII of France, James IV of Scotland and his illegitimate son Alexander Stewart, bishop of St Andrews, both killed in 1513 at the Battle of Flodden Field. 'What a fund of happiness was there, if only some evil genius had not compelled the king to overstep the boundaries of his kingdom and try the fortune of war with a most warlike foe in a foreign field'.²⁰ Alexander

¹⁵ ASD II. 7,15; Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 110.

¹⁶ Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 111; ASD II. 7,16: 'Bellona furiosum quatit flagellum; "Furor impius", raptis omnibus uinculorum nodis, euolat "horridus ore cruento"; Virgil, *Aeneid* I 294 and 296.

¹⁷ Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 112, 113, 118, 130.

¹⁸ Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 118.

¹⁹ Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 102.

²⁰ Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 106.

had been a pupil of Erasmus's in Italy (1508–1509), and the Dutchman was clearly very fond of the young man. Ironically, perhaps, on first meeting Alexander, he had just completed a work entitled *Antipolemos* (Anti-war treatise), which has not survived.

The beginning of Ronsard's poetic career in the late 1540s coincides with the accession to the throne of Henry II in 1547. In complete contrast to his father, Francis I, one of the greatest patrons of learning and the arts that France has ever had, his son was only interested in the military side of his princely role, and much of his reign, as Ronsard himself did not fail to point out, was characterised by war. Ronsard's 1558 poem "Exhortation pour la Paix" is a good illustration of the poet's attitude to war and peace. The poem was written at a moment of hostility between France and Spain, which for various reasons Henry II decided to end through negotiation.²¹ The opening of the poem immediately picks up on Erasmus's horror at the idea of Christian fighting Christian:

Non, ne combattez pas, vivez en amitié,
 CHRETIENS, changez vostre ire avecque la pitié,
 Changez à la douceur les rancunes ameres,
 Et ne trampez vos dars dans le sang de vos freres,
 Que CHRIST le fils de Dieu, abandonnant les cieux,
 En terre a rachetez de son sang precieux,
 Et nous a tous conjoins par sa bonté divine
 De nom, de foy, de loy, d'amour & de doctrine,
 Nous montrant au partir comme il falloit s'aymer,
 Sans couvrir dans le cueur un courroux si amer.²²

No, do not fight, live in friendship, Christians, exchange wrath for pity, bitter grudges for gentleness, and do not soak your weapons in your brothers' blood, whom Christ, the son of God, leaving heaven, redeemed on earth with his own precious blood, joining us all together by his divine goodness in name, faith, law, love, and teaching, showing us on leaving how we should love one another without breeding such bitter anger in our hearts.

Erasmus had emphasised the notion that Christians are all brothers, and that war between them is unnatural:

²¹ Paul Laumonier speaks of the king's desire, on the one hand, for the release of the connétable de France, Anne de Montmorency, held captive by the Spaniards since August 1557, and also his fear of the increasing threat posed by the Huguenots as motives for coming to some form of accommodation with the king of Spain, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. IX, x. The references to Ronsard's text provide volume number, page number, and line number; the English translations are my own.

²² Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. IX, 15 1–10.

[...] unde hoc nobis in mentem venit ut Christianus in Christianum cruentum stringat ferrum? Parricidium vocatur, si frater occidat fratrem; at Christianus coniunctior Christiano quam ullus germanus germano, nisi firmiora sunt naturae vincula quam Christi.²³

[...] how did we get it into our heads that Christian should draw a bloody sword on Christian? If one brother kills another, it is called fratricide. But a Christian is nearer allied to another Christian than any brother can be, unless the bonds of nature are closer than those of Christ!

Ronsard goes on to say that it is natural for lions, wolves, and tigers to fight (lines 11–14) in a passage which seems to recall exactly Erasmus:²⁴

Ne ferae quidem omnes dimicant (sunt enim et innoxiae, sicut damae et lepores), sed omnium efferatissimae, veluti leones, lupi, tigrides.²⁵

Not all wild creatures are given to fighting (for there are some quite harmless ones, like hares and fallow deer), but only the really savage ones like lions, wolves, and tigers.

A long section follows (lines 27–80), encouraging a holy war against the Turks as an alternative to internecine conflict between Christian nations, something that, as we have seen, Erasmus himself disapproved of unless it was absolutely unavoidable. However, Ronsard then moves on to another Erasmian theme, focusing on an anthropomorphic vision of the earth.

Ah ! malheureuse terre, à grand tort on te nomme
Et la douce nourrice, & la mère de l'homme,
Par toy seule nous vient ce malheureux souci
De s'entreguerroyer & se tuer ainsi.

On dit que quelquefois te sentant trop chargée
D'hommes qui te foulloyent, pour estre soulagée
Du fais qui t'accabloit ton échine si fort,
Tu prias Jupiter de te donner confort.
Et lors il envoya la méchante Discorde
Exciter les Thebains d'une guerre tresorde,
Vilaine, incestueuse, où l'infidelle main
Des deux Freres versa leur propre sang germain.

²³ ASD II. 7,26; Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 120–121.

²⁴ 'C'est à faire aux lions remplis de tyrannie, / Aux loups Apuliens, aux tigres d'Hyrcanie, / De se faire la guerre [...]' ('It is the business of tyrannical lions, Apulian wolves, and Hyrcanian tigers to make war on one another'). Ronsard retains here Erasmus's three particularly savage animals in the same order in which they occur in the "Dulce bellum" text.

²⁵ ASD II. 7,16; Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 111.

Après elle alluma la querelle Troyenne,
 Où la force d'Europe, & la force Asienne
 D'un combat de dix ans sans se donner repos,
 De toy, terre marastre, ont déchargé le dos.
 Mille combats apres venus par violence
 Ont si bien esclarcy des peuples l'abondance,
 Que tu ne sçauroys plus, ô grossier animal,
 Te plaindre que le dos te face plus de mal.²⁶

Oh, wretched Earth, falsely are you called sweet nurse and mother of mankind; through you alone comes to us this wretched desire to make war on each other and so kill ourselves. It is said that, once, feeling overladen with a press of men, to gain relief from the burden which oppressed your back so heavily, you begged Jupiter to provide you with comfort. Thereupon he sent evil Discord to stir up the Thebans in war most foul, ugly, incestuous, in which the faithless hand of two brothers spilt their own fraternal blood. Afterwards, she ignited the Trojan dispute, in which the might of Europe and the might of Asia, by fighting for ten years without respite, lightened the load on your back, stepmother earth. A thousand subsequent battles have so thinned out in violence the multitude of peoples that you can no longer complain, gross creature, that your back still hurts.

While the invented myth in this passage of Jupiter sending Discord down to earth in order to alleviate the burden she was bearing is a typical Ronsardian ploy, the idea of the earth being seen in this specific context as a stepmother is surely inspired by Erasmus's adage, where Nature is made to say:

Sunt qui me novercam noverca novam appellent, quod in tam immensa rerum summa venena quaedam genuerim. [...] Quae tandem est ista plus quam noverca, quae novam hanc beluam, totius mundi pestem, nobis dedit?²⁷

There are those who call me a harsh stepmother, because I engendered a few venomous creatures among all the grand total of created things. [...] What stepmother, and worse, has given us this new wild beast, a plague to the whole world.

The following section, too (lines 107–122), in which Ronsard compares the vulnerable state in which man is born with the aggressive or protective features which are natural in other animals, also derives from Erasmus. He addresses his wretched fellow humans as 'vous qui naissez tous nus / Sans force & desarmez' (you who are all born naked, weak, and unarmed),

²⁶ Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. IX, 20–21 and 91–106.

²⁷ ASD II. 7,18; Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 112–113.

echoing Erasmus's words: 'Solum hominem nudum produxit, imbecillem, tenerum, inermem, mollissima carne, cute leui', cited above, and contrasts this with the 'dragons, lions, tigresses' which are 'armez ou de griffe, ou d'escailles espesses' (armed with claws or thick scales).

In the next section (lines 123–146), Ronsard sees the discovery of iron in the bowels of the earth and the theft by Prometheus of fire, enabling mankind to forge weapons of war, as being responsible for much of the killing that has taken place. He then proceeds, like Erasmus, to contrast the two states of peace and war. Peacetime is compared to the Golden Age, when the earth nourished its people without effort:

Qu'heureuse fut la gent qui vivoit sous Saturne,
Quand l'aise & le repos, & la paix taciturne,
Bien loing de la trompette, & bien loing des soldars,
Loing du fer & de l'or, erroit de toutes parts
Par les bois assurée, & du fruit de la terre
En commun se paissoit sans fraude ny sans guerre.²⁸

How happy was the race that lived under Saturn, when ease and rest and quiet peace, far away from bugle and from soldiers, far from iron and gold, wandered in safety abroad through the woods, and in common fed on the fruits of the earth without deceit or war.

Erasmus had, similarly, likened peacetime to spring, and while his depiction stops short of the primeval abundance associated with man in a state of innocence, it still emphasises the notion of plenty:

Pacis tempore, non secus ac si novum quoddam ver rebus humanis adfulserit, coluntur agri, vernant horti, pascuntur laetae pecudes [...]²⁹

In time of peace, it is just as if spring-time were shedding its sunshine over human affairs; fields are tilled, gardens grow green, flocks graze in contentment...

Like Erasmus, Ronsard contrasts this with the scenes of horror that take place in war, but whereas Erasmus speaks in general terms, Ronsard particularises his remarks by focusing on French geographical locations when he refers to his desire not to see

²⁸ Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. IX, 23; 147–152.

²⁹ ASD II. 7,23; Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 118.

[...] tant de glaives tranchans,
 Tant de monceaux de morts qui engressent les champs,
 Tant de chevaux occis dechargez de leur somme
 Empescher tout le cours de Moselle ou de Somme,
 Ny tant de mourions, ny de plastrons ferrez
 Tenir les rouges flots de la Meuse enserrez.³⁰

[...] so many trenchant swords, so many heaps of corpses manuring the fields, so many slain horses that have lost their loads stopping up the flow of the Moselle and the Somme, or so many helmets or iron-clad breastplates blocking the red floods of the Meuse.

We can compare this to the earlier quotation from Erasmus concerning the 'slaughtered lying in heaps'. In a series of short statements, Ronsard evokes the results of war, again inspired by Erasmus:

Par la cruelle guerre on renverse les villes,
 On deprave les loix divines & civiles,
 On brule les autelz, & les temples de Dieu,
 L'equité ne fleurist, la justice n'a lieu,
 Les maisons de leurs biens demeurent depouillées,
 Les vieillards sont occis, les filles violées,
 Le pauvre laboureur du sien est destitué,
 Et d'un vice execrable on fait une vertu.³¹

Through cruel war, cities are overturned, divine and civil laws are corrupted, altars are burnt along with God's churches, law no longer flourishes, justice has no place, homes remain stripped of their possessions, the old are slaughtered, girls raped, the poor husbandman is stripped of his goods, and hateful vice is turned into virtue.

All of this mirrors closely Erasmus's description of wartime, in which:

'Silent leges', ridetur humanitas, nullum habet locum aequitas; religio ludibrio est, sacri et prophani nullum omnino discrimen.³²

'The laws are silent', humanity is jeered at, there is no place for justice, religion is held up to scorn, there is no difference between sacred and profane.

³⁰ Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. IX, 23; 157–162.

³¹ Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. IX, 23–24, 163–170.

³² ASD II. 7,24; Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 118.

Ronsard completes his poem first by an appeal to the soldiers themselves to enjoy the benefits of peace and to turn their swords into ploughshares (lines 171–194), and then by an evocation of Peace on a cosmic and terrestrial level, associating it with abundance and fertility (195–212). The poem ends with an eight-line invocation to Peace.

Ronsard does not, of course, rely only on Erasmus in this poem. Tibullus's anti-war poem, 'Quis fuit horrendos primus qui protulit enses? / Quam ferus et vere ferreus ille fuit!' ('Who was it who first proffered dreadful swords? How ireful and truly iron-hearted was he!'),³³ contains a number of the themes developed by Ronsard, including the anti-metallurgical elements and the desire to return to a Golden Age. But there can be no doubt that the underlying inspiration is Erasmian in nature, and that Ronsard has a deeper commitment to peace than the historical circumstances surrounding the composition of this poem might, more cynically, indicate.

Near the beginning of the following year, 1559, Ronsard composed a second poem devoted to the subject of peace, this time addressed to the king. Ronsard is surprisingly critical of Henry in this poem, stating that he is 'le Roy qui plus avez été / En guerre & en discord' ('the king who has most often been at war and strife').³⁴ Speaking a few lines further on of peace, he writes:

Ceux qui la gardent bien, le haut Dieu les regarde,
Et ne regarde point un Roy, de qui la main
Tousjours trempe son glaive au pauvre sang humain.³⁵

Those that maintain peace are heeded by God, who does not heed a king whose hand is always soaking his sword in poor human blood.

Erasmus too had been critical of princes, asserting that:

Quanquam his temporibus omne fere bellum e titulis nescio quibus nasci videmus et ex principum ambiosis foederibus, dum, ut unum aliquod oppidulum suae vindicent ditioni, totum imperium adducunt in extremum discrimen.³⁶

However, in these days we notice that almost every war arises from some claim or other, and from the selfish treaties of princes; for the sake of assert-

³³ Tibullus, *Elegies*, I, 10.

³⁴ Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. IX, 106, 34–35.

³⁵ Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. IX, 106, 46–48.

³⁶ ASD II. 7,36; Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 131.

ing the right of dominion over one small town, they gravely imperil their whole realm.

As Ronsard writes:

SIRE, je vous supply de croire qu'il vaut mieux
Se contenter du sien, que d'estre ambitieux
De sur le bien d'autrui: malheureux qui desire,
Ainsi comme à trois dets, hazarder son empire [...]³⁷

Sir, I beg you to believe that it is better to be content with what one has than to have designs on other men's wealth. Wretched the man who, as in a game of dice, desires to wager his kingdom [...].

However, it is once again in his evocation of peace and war that he paints a particularly bleak contrast between the two states in line with Erasmus's own view. This time, he is closer in the details that he evokes, especially of the fertility of the countryside:

Adoncques en repos les campagnes jaunissent,
Toutes pleines d'espis, les fleurs s'espandissent
Le long d'un bas rivage, & plus haut les raisins
Aux sommetz des coutaux nous meurissent leurs vins.
Le peuple à l'aise dort, les citez sont tranquilles,
Les Muses & les arts fleurissent par les villes,
La gravité se montre avecques la vertu,
Et par la sainte loy le vice est abatu,
Les navires sans peur dans les havres abordent,
Avec les estrangers les estrangers s'accordent.³⁸

Then in peace the countryside grows golden, full of ears of corn, flowers bloom down along a riverbank, and higher up grapes ripen into wine for us on the tops of the hills. Folk sleep at ease, cities are at peace, the Muses and the arts flourish in the towns, authority appears with virtue, and through holy law vice is defeated, ships enter harbour without fear, and stranger is in accord with stranger.

Although Ronsard varies the details, this section of his poem follows closely the logic of the passage of the adage quoted earlier, which continues:

[...] vigent leges, floret reipublicae disciplina, fervet religio, valet aequitas, pollet humanitas, calent artes opificum, uberius est quaestus pauperum, splendidior opulentia divitum.³⁹

³⁷ Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. IX, 113, 203–206.

³⁸ Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. IX, 111, 141–150.

³⁹ ASD II. 7,23; Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 118.

[...] the laws are in full strength, statecraft flourishes, religious fervour grows, justice holds sway, humanity is influential, arts and crafts are carried on with enthusiasm, the poor earn more and the opulence of the rich is more splendid.

On the other hand, the devastating picture that Ronsard draws of war picks up many of the themes developed by Erasmus:

Et alors la Justice, & la simple amitié,
 Vergongne, preudhommie, innocence, & pitié,
 Couvertes d'une nue, au monde ne sejourment 105
 Et pour se pleindre à Dieu dans le ciel s'en retournent.
 Une frayeur, un bruit, une esclatante voix
 De tous costez s'entend d'hommes & de harnois,
 Un peuple contre l'autre en armes se remue,
 Une forte cité contre l'autre est esmue, 110
 Un prince contre l'autre ordonne son arroy
 Et un Roy dans son camp deffie un autre Roy.
 De sur la dure enclume on rebat les espées,
 Et d'acier & de fer les lames destrampées
 Se tournent en cuirasse, & se laissent forger 115
 En dague & en poignart pour nous entre-egorger:
 Car on ne combat plus pour l'honneur d'une joustte,
 D'un prix ou d'un tournoy, mais afin que l'on s'oustte
 L'un à l'autre la vie, & afin que la mort
 Du foible combatant soit le prix du plus fort. 120
 Toutes mechancetez aux soldats sont permises,
 Du pauvre sang humain on baigne les eglises,
 Le docte et l'ignorant ont une mesme fin,
 La finesse ne peut servir à l'homme fin,
 Ny les piedz au crentif: la cruelle arrogance 125
 Du fer ambitieux se donne la licence
 De vaguer impunie, & sans avoir egard
 A la crainte des loix, perse de part en part
 Aussi bien l'estomac d'une jeune pucelle,
 Que celui d'un enfant qui pend à la mamelle, 130
 Les vieillars de leurs litz tremblans sont deboutez,
 Et l'image de mort paroist de tous costez.
 Aucunesfois la peste, & la maigre famine
 Accompaignent la guerre [...] ⁴⁰

Then Justice, simple friendship, shame, honesty, innocence, and pity, covered by a cloud, cease to dwell on earth, returning to heaven to complain to God. Tumult, din, a piercing voice of men and armour are heard on all

⁴⁰ Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. IX, 109–110, ll. 103–134.

sides, one nation against another moves to arms, one stronghold is stirred up against another, one prince orders his battle lines against another, and one king defies another in his camp. Swords are beaten out on hard anvils, and seasoned plates of steel and iron are turned into body armour, allow themselves to be forged into knives and daggers to let us cut one another's throats. Men no longer fight for the honour of a joust, for a prize, or a tournament, but to take each other's lives, so that the death of the weaker combatant is the prize of the stronger. Soldiers are permitted all manner of wickedness, churches are bathed in poor human blood, dullard and scholar meet the same end, craft cannot serve the crafty man, nor swiftness of foot the craven. The cruel arrogance of the ambitious sword allows itself the freedom to wander unpunished, and, with no regard for respect for the laws, it pierces through and through the belly of a young maiden as well as of a baby hanging from its mother's breast; the old are, trembling, driven from their beds, and the image of death appears on all sides. Sometimes plague and wasting famine accompany war [...].

Once again, despite differences in detail, Ronsard follows closely, and in the same spirit, the emotive descriptions of war produced by Erasmus. Lines 107–108 recall Erasmus's words evoking

hinc atque hinc instructas ferratas acies, formidabilem armorum crepitum simul et fulgorem, inamabilem tantae multitudinis fremitum, oculos minaces.⁴¹

the iron-clad troops drawn up in battle array, the terrifying clash and flash of arms, the hateful noise and bustle of a great multitude, the threatening looks [...].

Lines 109–112 recall Erasmus: 'We are continually at war, race against race, kingdom against kingdom, city against city, prince against prince'. Similarly, the last section of this quotation, lines 121–134, provides a graphic account of the civilian casualties of war, caused by the lawlessness of the soldiers, as well as the natural disasters – famine and plague – which war facilitates. All this is very much in keeping with Erasmus's own focus on the indirect consequences of war, the collateral damage which is an inevitable result.

Both the poems we have been considering here are linked to particular national political events, but several years earlier, in 1555, Ronsard had composed a hymn in honour of Henry II, which despite its apparently celebratory nature is nevertheless critical of his bellicose tendencies. In particular, it evokes on more than one occasion the horrors of war, at one

⁴¹ ASD II. 7,15; Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on his Times* 110.

point in allegorical terms reminiscent of Erasmus's reference to the way the ancient poets depicted them:

Or' la Paix est rompue, & ne faut plus chercher
 Qu'à se meurdrir en guerre, & à se detrancher
 L'un l'autre par morceaux, la Pitié est bannye,
 Et en lieu d'elle regne Horreur, & Tyrannie:
 On oit de tous costé les armeures tonner,
 On n'oit pres de la Meuse autre chose sonner
 Que mailles & boucliers, & Mars, qui se pourmene
 S'egaye en son harnois dedans un char monté,
 De quatre grandz coursiers horriblement porté.
 La Fureur & la Peur leur conduisent la bride,
 Et la Fame emplumée, allant devant pour guide,
 Laisse avec un grand flot ça & là parmy l'air
 Sous le vent des chevaux son panage voler,
 Et Mars, qui de son char les espaules luy presse,
 D'un espieu Thracien contraint cette Deesse
 De cent langues semer des bruitz & vrais & faux,
 Pour effroyer l'Europe & la remplir de maux.⁴²

Now Peace is broken, and all that is left is to seek to murder one another in war, to hack each other to pieces; Pity is banished and in her place reign Horror and Tyranny. On all sides can be heard the thunder of arms, the only sound near the Meuse is the clash of mail and shield, and Mars stalks the earth, glorying in his armour, mounted in a chariot terrifyingly drawn by four mighty coursers. Fury and Fear guide their bridles, and winged Rumour, preceding them as guide, lets her plumage flow around in the air blown by the horses' breath; Mars, hard on her heels in his chariot, with Thracian spear forces this goddess to spread true and false rumours in a hundred tongues, to put Europe to fright and fill her with evils.

The mixture here of actual events within a hypotyposis full of allegorical or mythical figures produces a picture of war which Erasmus would have recognised, and which reflects the generally irenic stand that Ronsard demonstrates in his poetry.

The three poems we have considered here have a great deal in common in the way they deal with the subject of war and peace. However, an earlier poem, the "Ode de la Paix",⁴³ dedicated to Henry II in 1550, is very different in subject matter and in tone, treating the topic on a more cosmic level, while at the same time rehearsing already much of the material

⁴² Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. VIII, 41–42, ll. 689–706.

⁴³ Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. III, 3–35.

that Ronsard would use in the *Franciade*. Between this poem and the later ones, Erasmus's influence seems to have made itself felt on Ronsard.

A final point of interest concerns the reception of the first of the poems we have been looking at, the "Exhortation pour la Paix". The same year that it was published, it was translated into Latin by a Flemish doctor and humanist called Franciscus Thorius (François de Thoor) of Bail-leul, born in 1525 and a school friend of Charles Utenhovius, who was tutor to the Morel family mentioned earlier. He lived at one point with André Wechel, the publisher of the "Exhortation pour la Paix", and it is he who publishes Thorius's Latin version.⁴⁴ Like Ronsard, he frequented the Morel household, and like other members of the circle he was sympathetic to Erasmian ideas. No doubt this explains his particular interest in this one poem by Ronsard. This also tends to confirm Henri Franchet's notion that Ronsard's exposure to Erasmus may have been through this important Parisian salon, a haven of tolerance on the eve of the French Wars of Religion.

⁴⁴ For full details on Thorius, see Devos F., "François Thorius (Thooris) et son fils Raphaël médecins, poètes et mathématiciens de la Renaissance", on <<http://home.nordnet.fr/~rgombert/Meteren/FicheN16.htm>>, last consulted on 12 May 2011. The Latin version appeared as *P. Ronsardi ad Pacem exhortatio Latinis versibus de Gallicis expressa a Francisco Thorio Bellione* (Paris, André Wechel: 1558).

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ON GOOD GOVERNMENT:
ERASMUS'S *INSTITUTIO PRINCIPIS CHRISTIANI*
VERSUS LIPSIUS'S *POLITICA**

Jeanine De Landtsheer

1. *A General Introduction to Both Treatises*

1.1. *Erasmus*

In 1515 Jean le Sauvage, Lord Chancellor of Brabant, proposed to appoint Erasmus councillor of the adolescent Charles V. One year later this proposal was accepted, although it was, in fact, no more than a honorary title involving an annuity of two-hundred guilders. In May of that same year Johann Froben published Erasmus's *Institutio Principis Christiani*, a treatise dedicated to the young sovereign on the occasion of his accession to the throne of Aragon [Fig. 1].¹ According to the author's letters of that time, it had taken him more than a year to finish the treatise. He did not so much vent his political ideas, but rather present them as part of what was first and foremost conceived as a pedagogical treatise. At the same time Erasmus published by way of introduction a translation of pseudo-Isocrates, *On kingship*, addressed to King Nicocles of Salamis, a translation of Plutarch's essay *On the Importance of Philosophers to Men in Power* (= *Moralia* 776a–779c),² and a reissue of the *Panegyric for Archduke Philip of Austria*, an oration he had delivered when Charles V's father, Philip the Fair, returned to the Low-Countries from Spain at the end of 1503 (the text is dated 6 January 1504).

* For the proofreading of my English, I am greatly indebted to Charles Fantazzi. Chris Heesakkers kindly accepted to read the penultimate version and offered some useful suggestions. Adrie vander Laan (Curator of the Erasmiana at Rotterdam, Municipal Library), Anton van der Lem (Curator of the Rare Book Department at Leiden UB) and Katrien Smeyers (Curator of the Rare Book Department at Leuven UB) allowed me to publish the illustrations.

¹ Cf. Herding O. (ed.), *ASD IV.1* (Amsterdam: 1974) 95–219; *The education of a Christian Prince*, translated by Neil M. Cheshire and Michael J. Heath, *Collected Works of Erasmus* (henceforth *CWE*) 27 (Toronto-Buffalo-London: 1986) 199–288, and reprinted together with *Panegyric for Archduke Philip of Austria*, translated by Lisa Jardine, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* (Cambridge: 1997).

² *Sc. Maxime cum principibus philosopho esse disserendum* (*Moralia* 776a–779c).

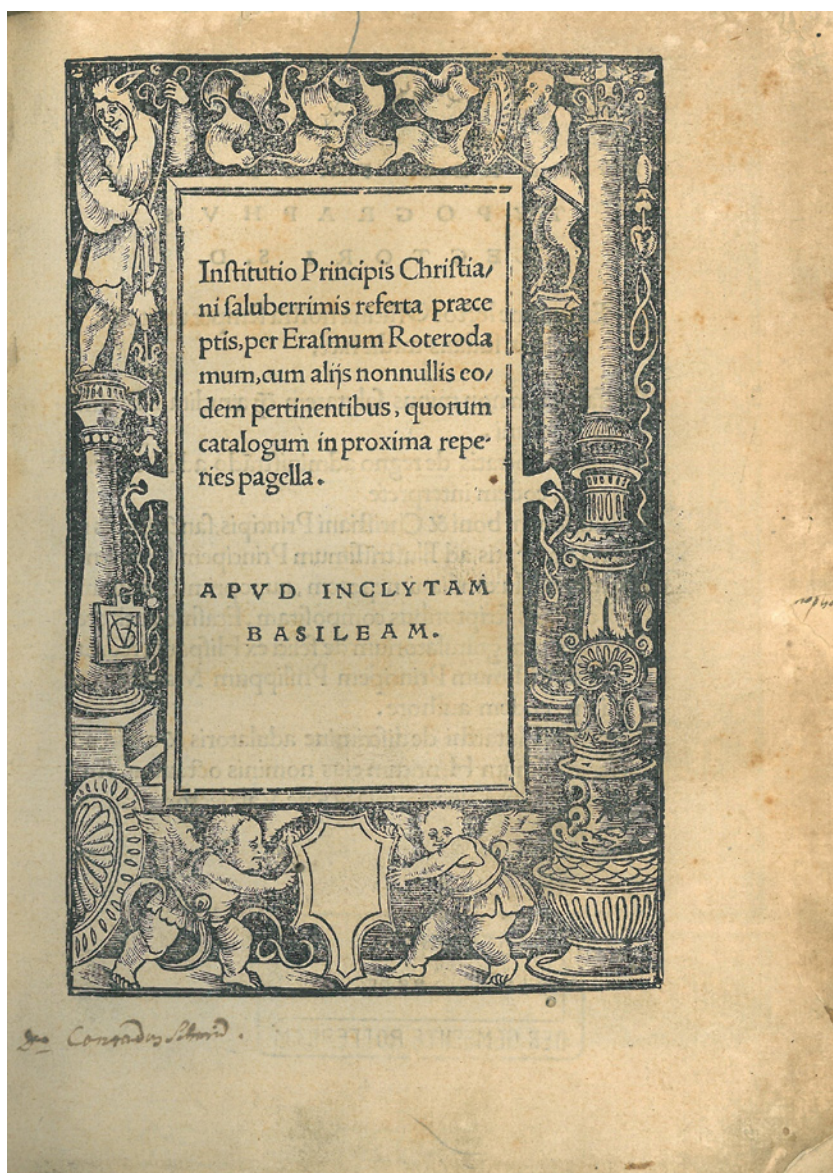


Figure 1. Title page of the *editio princeps* of Erasmus, *Institutio principis Christiani* (Basle, Johann Froben: 1516). Rotterdam Municipal Library, 2D3.

In the first chapter of his treatise, which is slightly longer than the next ten chapters together, Erasmus helps the future prince grow from early childhood into a virtuous adult who, to quote Lisa Jardine, 'needs to be educated so as to recognise and pursue the morally good in all things, in order to be able to take decisions correctly on behalf of his people'.³ Jardine does not mention here the point of view omnipresent throughout the *Institutio principis Christiani*, namely that a virtuous man and a wise and just ruler is *ipso facto* a good Christian. In the second half of his treatise Erasmus endeavours to paint a portrait of an exemplary ruler. In ten, much shorter chapters he dwells in a more practical way on various aspects of good government, a brief catalogue, in fact, of a sovereign's duties elucidated by useful suggestions of what a competent prince ought either to strive after or to avoid, often worked out by contrasting a true and honourable prince against a tyrant.

Despite the explicit reference to Isocrates, Erasmus found the inspiration for his ideal Prince also in Plato, as is proven by numerous quotations or paraphrases borrowed from either the *Republic* or the *Laws*. Aristotle's *Politics* as well was a useful source, together with Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* and Plutarch's essay *To an Uneducated Ruler* (= *Moralia* 779d–782f). Among the Latin authors, he made use of Seneca, especially of his *On clemency*, addressed to the young Nero, and Cicero's *On duties*.⁴

To avoid the descriptive, continuous, and often somewhat dull line of argument of a theoretical treatise, he preferred to put forward his ideas in a somewhat haphazard succession of thoughts, reminiscent of Seneca's *Letters to Lucilius*. Thus the reader is guided through a chain of mostly short paragraphs full of repetition and antithesis between what ought or ought not to be done, the whole illustrated by a plethora of aphorisms and numerous anecdotes about sovereigns from Antiquity. In the subtitle Erasmus described his method as 'aphorismis digesta quo minus onerosa sit lectio' ('divided into short, pithy sentences to make the reading less boring'). To embellish his argumentation and to make it more lively, numerous quotations and anecdotes were added. For the latter the biographies written by Diogenes Laërtius, Plutarch, Suetonius, and the authors of the *Historia Augusta* were a welcome source. Moreover, Erasmus also drew from his own publications, by using a number of *sententiae*

³ Jardine, *The Education of a Christian Prince* vii–viii.

⁴ Cicero's *De re publica* was only known via quotations in other authors; it was partially discovered in 1820.

commented upon some years before in his *Adagiorum Chiliades* (Venice, Aldus Manutius: 1508).

1.2. *Lipsius*

About seventy-five years later Justus Lipsius dedicated his *Politica sive civilis doctrinae libri sex* in a more general way to the Emperor, Kings and Princes (Imperator, Reges, Principes). This is also the reason why this letter has not been included in the appropriate volume of the *Iusti Lipsi Epistolae*.⁵ From the mid-1580s onwards, Lipsius's correspondence shows an increasing apprehensiveness of the changes in the political and religious climate of the Northern Netherlands, which led to a first, unsuccessful attempt of returning to his native country in 1586, after having taught at Leiden University from April 1578 onwards. It was probably during this journey that he conceived the idea of writing a treatise on statesmanship, to form a kind of philosophical diptych with his *De Constantia libri duo. Qui alloquium praecipue continent in publicis malis*, published by Christopher Plantin in Leiden in 1584.⁶ To quote Jan Waszink in the introduction to his recent edition: 'It is Lipsius' explicit aim to provide a discussion of government which is generally and universally valid. At the same time the *Politica* is strictly practical. All theoretical debates of moral and political philosophy stay in the background, and Lipsius does not explicitly answer or react to existing theories'.⁷

⁵ Sc. *Iusti Lipsi Epistolae, pars III: 1588–1590*, ed. S. Sué and H. Peeters (Brussels: 1987). The letter will nevertheless be included in the final volume of the series, *ILE XIX*. See also the facsimile edition of the English translation by William Jones, *Six Bookes of Politickes or Civil Doctrine, written in Latine by Iustus Lipsius, which doe especially concerne Principallitie* (London, Richard Field for William Ponsonby: 1594), *The English Experience* 287 (Amsterdam-New York: 1970) and its most recent edition Justus Lipsius, *Politica. Six Books of Politics or Political Instruction. Politicorum sive Civilis Doctrinae libri sex*, edited, with translation and introduction by J. Waszink, *Bibliotheca Latinitatis Novae* 5 (Assen: 2004). Lipsius's political thought and its influence on Neostoic political theory, especially within the German Empire, has been extensively studied by Gerhard Oestreich, cf. a survey of his ideas and bibliographical references in Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica* 10–14.

⁶ In the *Ad lectorem* of his *Politica*, Lipsius states: 'Quod nunc tibi damus, POLITICA esse vides; in quibus hoc nobis consilium, ut quemadmodum in CONSTANTIA cives formavimus ad patiendum et parendum, ita hic eos qui imperant ad regendum' – 'The work which I now present to you, is on POLITICS, as you see. It is my purpose, just as in DE CONSTANTIA I equipped citizens to endurance and to obedience, to equip men in power for governing' (translation slightly altered from Waszink [ed.], Lipsius, *Politica* 231).

⁷ Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica* 81.

In January 1587, hardly two months after his return to Leiden, Lipsius was gathering source material for his new treatise, as he informed one of his correspondents,⁸ but the fact that Prince Maurice appointed him rector of the University in February 1587 and again in 1588, certainly slowed down his writing. The treatise was printed as an in-quarto by Franciscus Raphelengius in Leiden and appeared in early August 1589 [Fig. 2]. Still that same year a cheaper in-octavo edition was available.⁹ By the summer of 1590 Raphelengius had run out of copies and published a second in-octavo edition, with a considerable number of (minor) corrections, which was available from August onwards, in time for the autumn book fair at Frankfurt. The specification 'quam auctor pro germana et fida agnoscit' ('acknowledged by the author as authentic and true') added to the title was to warn off possible readers of purchasing the cheap and sloppily printed edition, presented by the Frankfurt publishers Johann Wechel and Peter Fischer at the spring book fair of that same year [Fig. 3].¹⁰

Although the pedagogical concern of raising a young prince into a harmonious and virtuous adult, which is the subject of the first half of Erasmus's *Institutio Principis Christiani*, is entirely absent in the *Politica*, Lipsius's

⁸ Cf. *ILE* III, 87 01 03 C to Theodorus Canterus in Utrecht: 'Nos sumus in politicis quibusdam colligendis e Taciti et plurium scriptis' – 'We are making excerpts of texts about politics from the writings of Tacitus and several others'. The text tradition of Lipsius's *Politica* has been discussed at length by Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica* 165–198 (= chapter six). I am not at all convinced, though, that Lipsius really 'started writing the *Politica* when he was away from Leiden in October 1586 and travelling in northern Germany', as Waszink states (quot. p. 165 – my italics; the statement is repeated elsewhere). As we will see, the way Lipsius conceived his treatise was far too complicated for him to be working on it while he was in the middle of nowhere, without a good library at his disposal. Moreover, the letter to Canterus clearly shows that he was setting out to gather his material only two months later.

⁹ The first, fully dated covering letter is *ILE* III, 89 08 10 to Carolus Clusius. Lipsius's *Politica* was being printed when Plantin died on 1 July 1589. See on this first edition Vander Haeghen F. – Lenger M.-T., *Bibliotheca Belgica: Bibliographie générale des Pays-Bas*, 6 vols. (Brussels: 1964–1975), vol. III, 1040–1041, L–428 [henceforth abbreviated as *BBr*] and Voet L. – Voet-Grisolle J., *The Plantin Press, 1555–1589: a Bibliography of the Works printed and published by Christopher Plantin at Antwerp and Leiden*, 6 vols. (Amsterdam: 1980–1983), vol. III. Cf. also *Die Messkataloge Georg Willers. IV: Fastenmesse 1588 bis Herbstmesse 1592* (Hildesheim-New York: 1978) 208.

¹⁰ On Raphelengius's 1590 edition, see *BBr* vol. III, 1042, L-431 (= *Die Messkataloge* 316). On the unauthorized editions of Lipsius's *Politica* published by Johann Wechel and Peter Fischer in 1590–1591, see *BBr*, vol. III, 1042, L-430 (= *Die Messkataloge Georg Willers* 262) and *BBr* vol., III, 1043, L-433 (1591, not in *Die Messkataloge Georg Willers*) respectively; De Landtsheer J., "An author and his Printer: Justus Lipsius and the *Officina Plantiniana*", *Quaerendo* 37 (2007) 10–29 (especially 17–22). On 1 August 1592 Emperor Rudolph II granted Lipsius a privilege assuring the protection of any new work or edition published by the printer of his choice for a duration of thirty years.

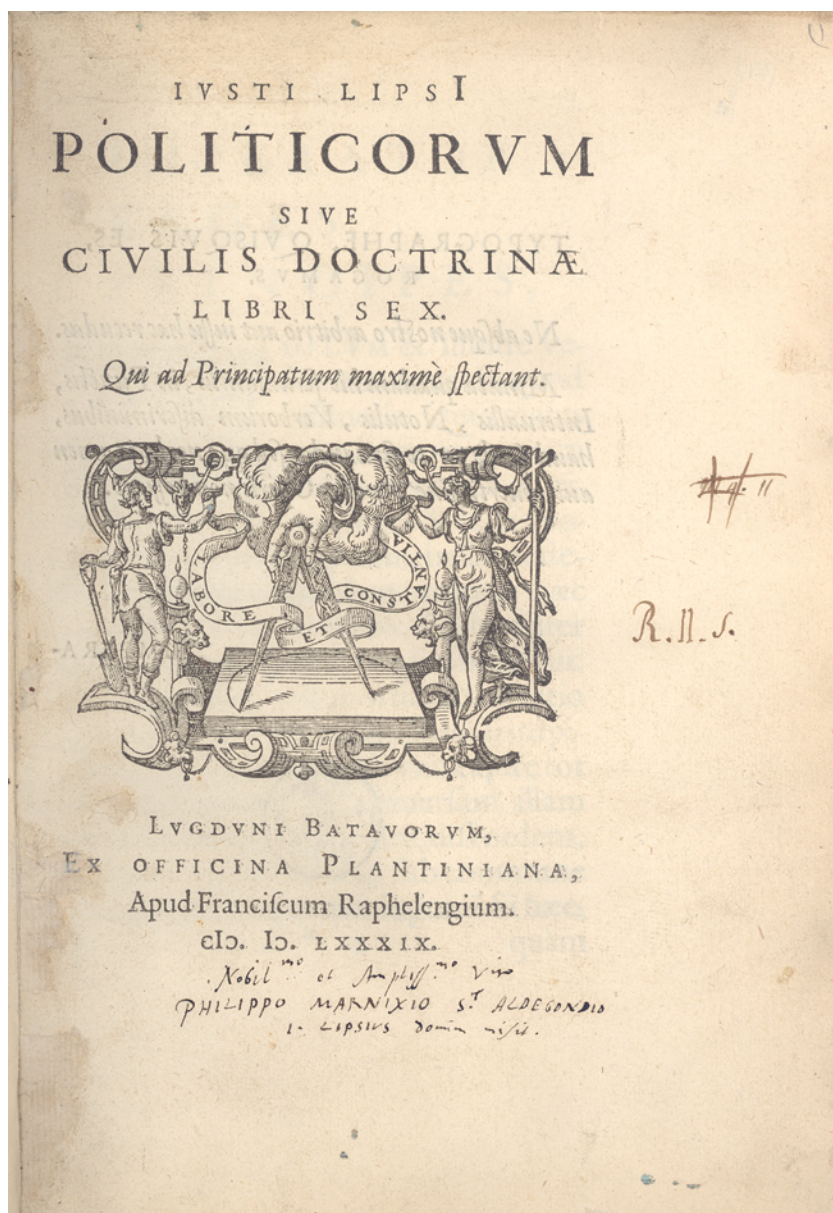


Figure 2. Title page of the *editio princeps* of Lipsius's *Politica* with autograph dedication to Philip Marnix of Sint Aldegonde: 'Nobilissimo et Amplissimo viro, Philippo Marnixio St. Aldegondio, I[ustus] Lipsius donum misit'. Leiden, University Library, 759 C 75:1.

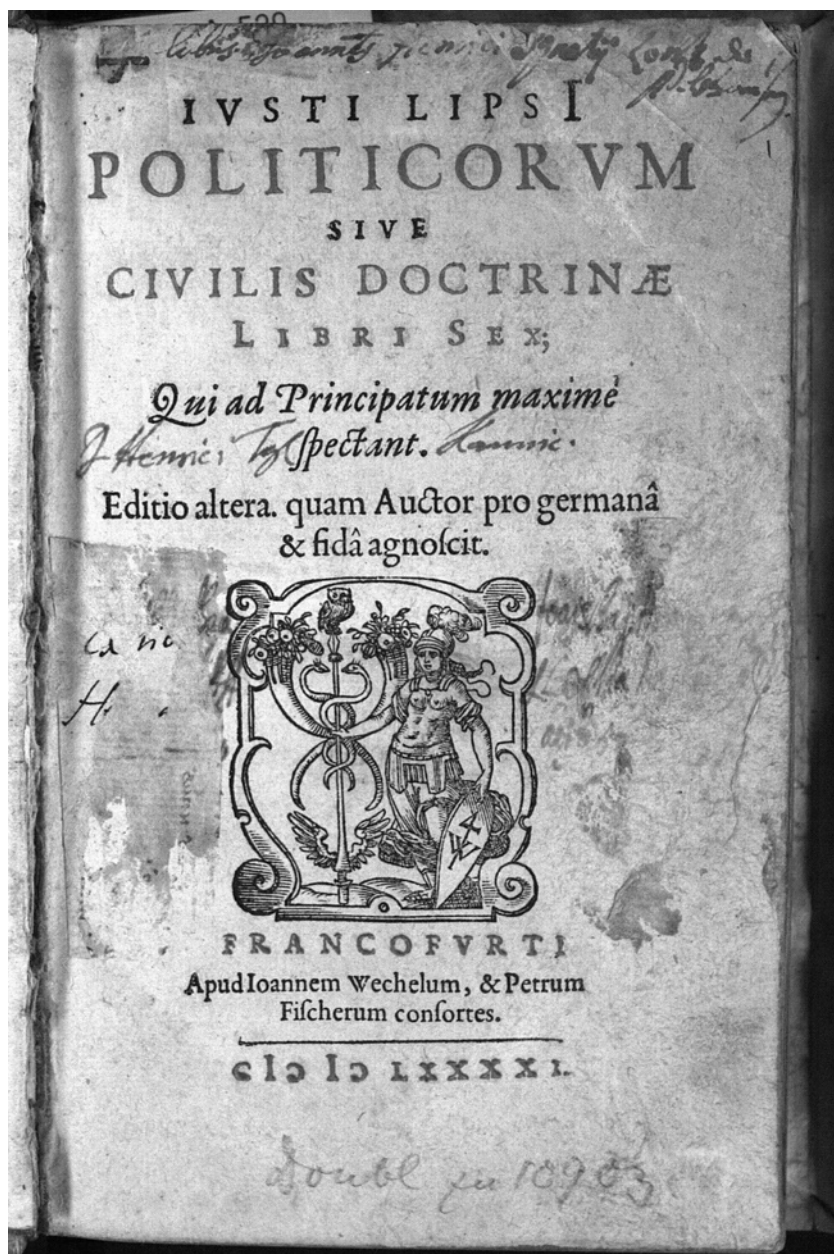


Figure 3. Title page of the pirate edition (Frankfurt, Fischer – Wechel: 1591).
Leuven, University Library, BRES, CaaA529.

treatise can nevertheless be divided into two similar parts. In books 1 and 2 the author focuses on *Virtus* and *Prudentia* (virtue and personal wisdom) as praiseworthy and necessary assets of any honourable man, which will win a ruler credibility and respect. As is the case with Erasmus, this general portrait endorses entirely the ideas promoted by traditional Cicero-nian, Stoic, and Christian morality. In the second part Lipsius switches to the public aspect of *Prudentia* as the main requisite for statecraft. After dealing in book three with the qualities to be expected from the prince's staff, he puts forward, in books four to six, his views on *propria Prudentia*, the political perception of the ruler himself, as a guarantee for a successful government, with special attention to the relation between State and Religion, the prince's attitude towards both external and civil war, and, consequently, the need for and the demands of a well organized army.

As is always the case in Lipsius's writings, the dedicatory letter is followed by a preface *Ad lectorem*, explaining the purpose of his work and other particulars, besides giving some advice about how the reader should proceed. As already pointed out, Lipsius wanted his reader to see the *Politica* as a continuation of his *De constantia*, but directed at sovereigns, their assistants or, in case of a young man, their humanist teachers, and by extension addressing whoever had a leading and responsible task in court, army, society, or church. Readers, who were thoroughly familiar with Latin and had sufficient knowledge of political theories were welcomed as well. Lipsius acknowledged that others before him had written about government and statecraft, Plato and Aristotle in particular, but they had discussed all forms of government in a more general way, whereas he wanted to concentrate on monarchy, as was done by Xenophon, albeit in a limited and not wholly clear way, and based on ancient or barbarian examples. He did not select more recent authors,¹¹ although he cautiously admitted his admiration for the sharp intellect of Niccolò Machiavelli, who was immediately criticized for not urging his Prince to follow the path leading towards Virtue and Honor. The most important part of this preface, though, is Lipsius's explanation of how he conceived his work:

For I have applied a rather unexpected kind of style, so that I could truly say that everything is mine and nothing. Although the approach of the subject and the composition are mine, the wording and phrasing are gathered in

¹¹ In fact, Erasmus is never mentioned or explicitly referred to, although Lipsius occasionally intertwines his text with one of his *Adages*.

various ways from ancient writers, mostly from historians; that is, in my eyes, from the very source of Statecraft.¹²

He opted, indeed, to present his ideas in the form of a *cento*, a patchwork of quotations from a wide range of ancient, but also early-Christian authors – mainly Latin, but occasionally also Greek, albeit always with a Latin translation added. These citations and *sententiae* he composed into a coherent text by adding his own phrases and fitting the whole into a strict framework of definitions and references to the main line of thought. Further on in his *Ad lectorem* Lipsius acknowledged that to fit the quotations smoothly into his text and avoid any mistakes against the Latin he occasionally changed its phrasing somewhat, for instance the case of a noun or the time of a verb.

The efforts of Franciscus Raphelengius and, for reissues from 1596 onwards, Johannes Moretus and his son Balthasar, turned the *Politica* into a typographical masterpiece as well. By meticulously observing Lipsius's instructions they succeeded in maintaining a clear distinction between his own sentences (in roman and using the whole width of a page) and the quotations (in italics, with an indentation), which almost has the effect of a dialogue between Lipsius's opinion and its confirmation by a much older and approved authority. Source references – author's name, title of the work, and sometimes also the book – are added in smaller characters in the inner margins, whereas in the outer margins keywords

¹² 'Nam inopinatum quoddam stili genus instituimus, in quo vere possim dicere omnia nostra esse et nihil. Cum enim inventio tota et ordo a nobis sint, verba tamen et sententias varie conquisivimus a scriptoribus priscis, idque maxime ab Historicis; hoc est, ut ego censeo, a fonte ipso Prudentiae Civilis'. Cf. Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica* 230; 232 (the translation is mine). After finishing the treatise Lipsius added a number of annotations (*Ad libros Politicorum Notae*) for a double purpose: to give a clearer definition of what was ambiguous and to elucidate what was obscure. In *Notae* 1, 1, for instance, he used the following metaphor to explain once more the way he had conceived his work: 'Lapides et ligna ab aliis accipio; aedificii tamen exstructio et forma tota nostra. Architectus ego sum, sed materie varie undique condux. Nec araneorum sane textus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt, nec noster vilior, quia ex alienis libamus, ut apes' ('The stones and rafters I have taken from others; the construction and the shape, however, are entirely mine. I am the architect, but I have gathered material in various ways and from everywhere. A spider's web is not necessarily better, because it produces its own threads; nor does my building become inferior, because I have tasted from others, as bees do'). Cf. Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica* 722. Waszink did not consider the *Notae* as a component of the *Politica* and only published them as an appendix (appendix 2) without translation or comment. Moreover, although he based his modern edition on the 1599 version (cf. 216), he omitted the dedicatory letter (from the 1596 edition onwards) to Johannes Saracenus (Jean Sarazin, 1539–1598), Abbot of St Vaast's in Arras (1577) and Archbishop of Cambrai (1596), without a word of explanation.

from the main text or concise definitions or explanations of a term help the reader to keep up with the argumentation. Each chapter is indicated by a title in small capitals and a one-line summary of its contents in italics [Fig. 4].¹³ In the preliminary part of the *Politica*, these summaries have been brought together under the heading “Ordo et Index librorum singulatim et capitum” (“The order of and the Index to each of the books and their chapters”). In the main text each succeeding step in the argumentation and the definitions are highlighted by the use of capitals; occasionally a relevant word is emphasized by the use of italics.

Lipsius concluded his introduction by an *auctorum syllabus*, pointing out that Tacitus was by far the most quoted author, because of his wisdom, his pithy style, and because Lipsius was well acquainted with his

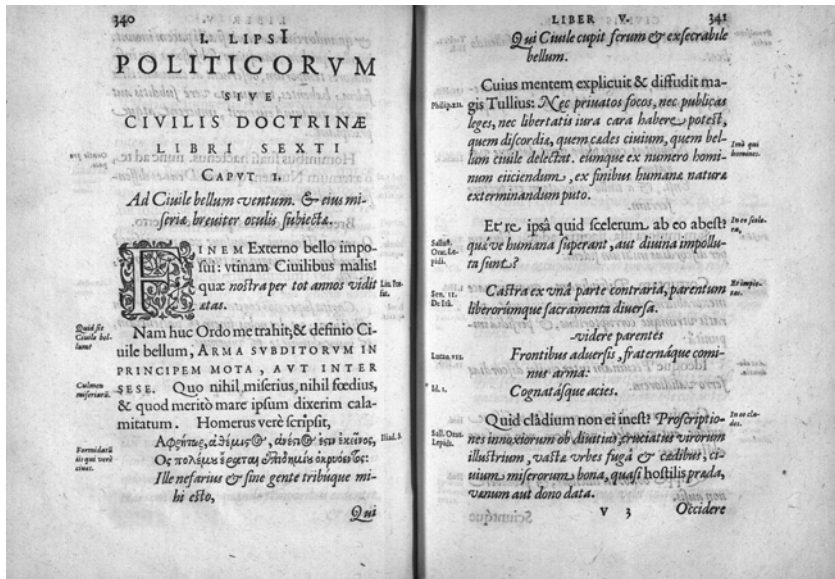


Figure 4. Lipsius, *Politica*, 6, § 1. Leiden, University Library, 759 C 75:1.

¹³ On the typical lay-out of the *Politica*, cf. Moss A., “Vision fragmentée et unitaire: les ‘Politiques’ et les recueils de lieux communs”, in Mouchel C. (ed.), *Juste Lipse (1547–1606) en son temps. Actes du colloque de Strasbourg, 1994*, Colloques, congrès et conférences sur la Renaissance 6 (Paris: 1996) 471–478.

work.¹⁴ It is remarkable that the Roman historian is praised for his sound, political ideas, and not as a master of the dramatic unveiling of hypocrisy, scheming, and intrigue. Other, more frequently quoted Latin authors were Sallust, Livy, Seneca, Cicero, Quintus Curtius, Pliny the Younger, and, concerning military matters, Vegetius; in Greek Aristotle, Plato, Thucydides, and Xenophon are the most quoted. Next follows a whole list of occasionally used sources, mostly Latin, including Biblical books, such as Jeremiah, Proverbs, Acts, the letters of Paul, and Jesus Sirach, or Fathers of the Church, such as Ambrose, Augustine, Lactantius, and Origen. He also mentions *Adagia*, without an editor's name, but most probably referring to Erasmus's collection.

2. *The Prince as a Good and Virtuous Man*

2.1. *Erasmus's Institutio Principis Christiani, Chapter 1*

The first chapter of the *Institutio Principis Christiani* was given the title "Nativitas et educatio principis" ("The Birth and Upbringing of a Christian Prince"). Erasmus opens his treatise by pointing out that sovereigns can either be selected by vote or born to the office. Despite his preference for election, a system by which one can take into account the candidate's equability of temperament, his experience, age, and probably also the state of his health, Erasmus accepts the hereditary system as point of departure for his treatise, because it is the most common in his own age. Since most princes simply succeed their fathers, the main hope of getting a good monarch depends on a proper education, which has to start from the very cradle, when the infant's mind is still virgin, unmarked, and undeveloped. As 'nothing makes so deep and indelible a mark as that

¹⁴ Lipsius had published the *Opera omnia* of Tacitus in 1574; soon after his arrival in Leiden, a revised edition followed by an extensive commentary to the *Annales* appeared (1581). Four years later the third, augmented reissue was published, this time with annotations to the *Historiae* and the *Opera minora* as well. Further research, as well as the remarks and information sent to him by friends and colleagues from abroad allowed him to publish a supplement to the commentary part, the *Curae secundae*, in 1588. The following year Lipsius published not only his *Politica*, but also a new edition of Tacitus, now with the *Curae secundae* incorporated in the existing commentary. Cf. De Landtsheer J., "Commentaries on Tacitus by Justus Lipsius. Their Editing and Printing History", in Henderson J.R. (ed.), *The Unfolding of Words: Commentary in the Age of Erasmus* (Toronto: 2011) [forthcoming]. Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica*, counted 528 quotations from Tacitus in the *Politica*, see his survey, 163.

which is impressed in those first years', evil influences have to be kept away and the child imbued with good principles and thoughts. Hence the importance of surrounding the young prince from his early childhood onwards with people of unblemished character, to whose exemplary way of life he can mirror himself, for a royal descent does not guarantee a royal character. Hence also the pre-eminent importance of making a careful selection of the man to whom the education of the future sovereign will be entrusted, for 'a country owes everything to a good prince, but it owes the prince himself to the one whose right counsel has made him what he is.' A teacher who understands his task must be able to reprimand without giving way to abuse, and to praise without giving way to flattery. He must be respected for his disciplined life and liked for his friendly manners. Throughout this first chapter Erasmus is often repeating themes he also develops in the *De pueris instituendis*, using the same or similar quotations and comparisons in addressing both teachers and parents. In this latter, strictly pedagogical treatise too, he kept accentuating the responsibility of parents towards their children, chiding them for lavishly spending money on the purchase of fields, horses, cattle and dogs, or to the training of these animals. Yet when it comes to the education of their children, the future heirs to their precious possessions, they are always looking for the cheaper solution.¹⁵ In the *Institutio Principis Christiani* this becomes:

Principum nonnulli magna cura dispiciunt, quibus equum insignem aut avem aut canem curandum tradunt, nihil autem referre putant, cui filium formandum committant, quem saepenumero talibus credunt praeceptoribus, qualibus nemo plebeius paulo cordatior suos liberos velit concredere. At quid retulerat filium genuisse imperio, nisi eundem cures educandum imperio?

Some princes investigate very carefully who should be entrusted with the care of a prized horse or bird or hound but think it of no importance to whose care they commit the training of a son, and he is very often put in the hands of a sort of teacher whom no ordinary citizen with a little intelligence would want for his children. But what is the point of begetting a son to govern if you do not take care of training him for government?¹⁶

¹⁵ The treatise goes back to Erasmus's sojourn in Italy (1506–1509), but was only completed some twenty years later and published by Jerome Froben and his associates in September 1529. On its genesis, cf. J.-C. Margolin in the "Introduction" to his *De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis*, ASD I.2 (Amsterdam: 1971) 3–7.

¹⁶ Cf. ASD IV.1, 139, l. 90–94; translation Cheshire and Heath, *CWE* 27, 208; Jardine, *The Education of a Christian Prince* 8.

Moreover, by providing for a proper education for his heir to the throne, the sovereign is already fulfilling an important duty towards his country and achieving praise for himself, for

Nulla pulchrior egregii principis commendatio, quam si talem relinquat rei-publicae, ad cuius collationem ipse parum bonus videatur. Nec poterat illius gloria verius illustrari quam sic obscurata.

There is no finer tribute to an excellent prince than when he bequeaths to the state someone by comparison with whom he himself seems ill-qualified, and his glory cannot be more truly illuminated than by being overshadowed in this way.¹⁷

The future sovereign must grow up into a honourable and virtuous man, who, even in his personal life, will not become involved with activities, aspirations, or pleasures which are popular or still acceptable among ordinary people, but unbecoming for the dignity and the exemplary life expected from a man in a position of authority. He shall always have the welfare of his subjects prevail over his own personal inclinations or advantages. He must learn that his authority and dignity do not depend on outward appearances, such as a long genealogical tree, wealth, glamorous apparel, a train of courtiers, flattering titles, a display of paintings and statues, but on spiritual riches, such as prudence, integrity, fortitude, courage, moderation, and generosity. Erasmus agrees with Plato that a good and wise Prince should be a philosopher as well (if not, he is a tyrant) but at the same time he underlines repeatedly that the king is in fact the image of Christ and his vicar on earth, and that he should model himself on this supreme model, an idea already expressed by Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler*, 3 (= *Moralia*, 780e–f). As Lisa Jardine points out at the end of this first chapter: 'The programme which Erasmus has here outlined is deliberately presented so that it may be appropriately adopted for the education of any boy whose future involves governing the lives of others, i.e. any boy from an elite family'.¹⁸

¹⁷ Cf. ASD IV.1, 138, l. 64–66; translation Cheshire and Heath, *CWE* 27, 207; Jardine, *The Education of a Christian Prince* 6–7.

¹⁸ Cf. Jardine, *The Education of a Christian Prince* 54, no. 91.

2.2. Lipsius's *Politica*, Book 1–2¹⁹

Lipsius too begins his *Politica* by discussing the moral qualities that a good and conscientious ruler shares with every honourable man, before turning to more practical advice on good government from book three onwards. As stated before, he did not dwell upon the childhood of the future prince and the need of a high-principled education. The first, rather short book, gives a general approach of the main assets of civil life, *virtus* and *prudentia*. Virtue is divided into *pietas* (religiousness) and *probitas* (uprightness). The former can be distinguished into internal and external religiousness, *sensus* (belief) and *cultus* (worship) – more weight is attached to the former. Closely linked with belief is the attitude towards *Fatum*, which should be accepted, albeit not in a desperate way,²⁰ whereas *Conscientia* is considered an appendage of worship. A bad conscience causes torment, whereas a good conscience assures a peaceful and harmonious life. After defining and shortly elaborating on *Probitas*, Lipsius passes to the second guide, *Prudentia*, which is divided into private and public wisdom. It is based on *usus* (experience from seeing or doing) and *memoria* (remembrance from hearing and reading). Lipsius prefers the former as a more difficult but more certain path towards wisdom. In a final chapter learning is recommended as a useful support for both Virtue and Wisdom.

In his second book Lipsius switches to government (*imperium*) with three main systems: monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Without further ado monarchy is presumed to be the best because it is the oldest form. It also stands closest to what is to be observed in nature. Moreover, it is the most rational option that a political entity should be ruled by one person, as a ship is steered by one captain. The alternative can only lead to chaos. In

¹⁹ In the introduction to his edition, Jan Waszink distinguishes two parts of three books each, a 'moral' and a 'practical' one, thus saddling himself with a complex construction, since 'the discussion of *Prudentia* starts already in book three' [about the prince's counselors and ministers], setting apart book five as 'a more technical "handbook" on how to build up a standing army', before linking up book six, on civil wars, to the more 'political' argument of book four again. Cf. Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica* 81–82 and 199–200 (quoted): 'In the first three books Lipsius speaks in terms of the traditional princely virtues, and thus carves out for himself a traditional moral ethos which provides him with a basis of acceptability and credibility from which, in the last three books, he can proceed to reshape that traditional morality'. I rather prefer to keep to Lipsius's composition as expounded in the titles and the introduction of various chapters and collected in the aforementioned *Ordo et Index librorum singillatim et capitum*.

²⁰ Lipsius had discussed *Fatum* and *Necessitas* at length in his *De constantia*, I, §17–21. These chapters raised controversy, as becomes clear from numerous non-Plantin editions and translations, were these chapters were often omitted.

the third chapter monarchy is defined as '(1) unius imperium, (2) moribus aut legibus delatum, (3) susceptum gestumque (4) parentium bono' ('the government by one, conferred in accordance with law and custom, and taken up and executed in order to serve the well-being of the subjects').²¹

In the next chapters the four elements of this definition are examined one by one. With regard to the first part, 'unius imperium', Lipsius raises the question whether the ruler should be a man or a woman. Both are possible, but nature and reason clearly prefer a man. The former is confirmed by a quotation from Aristotle (*Politics* 1259b), the latter by pointing out that God gave women a heart full of deceit (confirmed by Seneca, *Octavia* 868–869) and created them with a total lack of constancy (confirmed by Propertius II, 25, 22) and poor judgement (confirmed by Tacitus, *Annals* XV, 54). Women cannot, however, be entirely excluded from government, as is proved with a reference to Britons and Germans. In the second part of his definition, 'moribus aut legibus delatum', Lipsius states that there are only two legitimate ways to the throne, either by election or by succession. Unlike Erasmus at the beginning of his *Institutio Principis Christiani*, no immediate preference is shown. Succession prevents turmoil and is more secure; election, on the other hand, will find the better man and is a mark of freedom. In the third element, 'susceptum gestumque', it is pointed out that governors often start in a laudable way, but that they should continue to live up to the expectations throughout their reign. The final part of the definition, 'parentium bono', must be realized in both an external way, by bestowing benefits on the populace, and an internal way, by a virtuous and exemplary behaviour. To reach his salutary goal, the welfare of his people, the prince must follow the two guides defined and described in book one, namely *virtus*, which will reveal itself in his way of living, and *prudentia*, manifesting itself in his actions.

The remaining part of book two is devoted to *virtus*, which is necessary for the prince himself because of decorum, reputation, and the stability it brings in his reign. It must also be instilled in his subjects, as a guarantee of a sound and lasting community. The citizens will become virtuous through laws (to be discussed later) and the prince's example. Hence Justice and Clemency are defined and discussed as the main qualities needed in a good ruler. Justice must be dispensed in an impartial and moderate way, without heaping up laws or encouraging lawsuits. Clemency will make the ruler beloved and illustrious, and assures his

²¹ Translation quoted from Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica* 301.

position. This virtue too must be used with moderation; it might even slightly depart from justice, as long as it does not dissolve the strength of power. Reliability and Modesty are discussed as appendages of Justice and Clemency, respectively. In Lipsius's eyes there can be no doubt that reliability is a cornerstone of society, hence his fierce attack against Machiavelli and his followers ('ab Etruria doctores novi'), 'who poison the ears of Princes and exhort them *to forget about all that is right and honourable, so long as they pursue power*. Who serve up that long-since buried view that *Justice may be violated for the sake of ruling*'.²² Modesty must be instilled in both the mind and the actions of a prince. As his appearance is important as well, he should take care of his speech, which has to be serious and sober, and he must avoid extravagance in his apparel. This brings Lipsius to another asset, Majesty, and how it can be acquired. To conclude this list of virtues, a number of less prominent virtues are mentioned scatteredly and briefly: the ruler is recommended to be generous and chaste, to avoid anger and be scornful of slander. He must give heed to his reputation, both at the present time and with regard to posterity, and promote and support learning, 'which presently languishes. Because *when the rewards for study are removed, study itself will perish*'.²³

3. On Statecraft

3.1. Erasmus

With chapter two Erasmus begins the practical advice directed to the adult sovereign. First of all, the prince is to learn how to distinguish between idle or opportunist flattery, and well meaning friendship, since good advice is crucial for good government. Flattery is not limited to excessive praise, but can also reveal itself in honorary statues, paintings, literature, and titles.²⁴ In the next sections Erasmus focuses on a smooth government in peace-time, for, as he states in the opening lines of chapter three,

Iam tametsi prisci scriptores universam administrandae reipublicae rationem in duplices artes secuerunt, pacis et belli, et prior et praecipua cura debet esse principis instituendi in his rationibus, quae ad pacis tempora

²² Translation taken over from Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica* 333; 335. The italics are quotes from Cicero, *On Duties*, III, 82; and Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 524–525 respectively.

²³ Translation taken over from Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica* 345. Lipsius is quoting Tacitus, *Annals* XI, 7.

²⁴ For this chapter, Erasmus is indebted to Plutarch's essay *How to tell a Flatterer from a Friend* (*Moralia* 48e–74e).

sapienter moderanda pertinent, quibus hoc pro virili conandum est, ne belli muniis unquam sit opus.

Although ancient writers divided the whole theory of statecraft into two sets of skills, those of peace and of war, our first and foremost concern must be for training the prince in the skills relevant to wise administration in time of peace, because with them he must strive to his utmost: that the devices of war may never be needed.²⁵

A good understanding between the people and its leader is crucial for successful government. The prince is recommended to make himself familiar with his country by studying geography and history, and by making frequent tours throughout his realm. He will feel the same love towards his country as a farmer towards his lands or a father towards his family. Hence Erasmus's preference for a sovereign who was born and brought up among the people he is going to rule. He should also choose his spouse at home or close to home, instead of in distant countries. He must do his utmost to earn the unremitting affection of his subjects, but without losing any of his authority, in the way the Lord provokes the love and awe of mankind through his benefices. In his private life the prince should persist in a sober lifestyle; in public appearances he must exude authority and dignity. One of his principal concerns must be about a proper education in both private and public schools, to help his future citizens to grow up into good Christians and honest persons. In the next chapters Erasmus points out that moderation in the levy of revenues and taxes is crucial to gain the sympathy and the awe of one's citizens.

Hoc potius studendum et in hoc excogitandae rationes, ut quam potest minimum exigatur a populo. Commodissima fuerit augendi vectigalis ratio, si princeps sumptus supervacaneos amputarit, si ministeria ociosa reiecerit, si bella et his simillimas peregrinationes vitaverit, si officiorum rapacitatem cohibuerit et si magis studeat recte administrandae ditioni suae quam propagandae.

Rather should his efforts and deliberations be directed to this end, that he spend time away from his people as little as possible should be extracted from the people. The most suitable way of increasing revenue would be for the prince to abolish superfluous expenditure, to do away with redundant offices, to avoid wars and foreign tours (which are very like wars), to check the rapacity of public office, and to pay more attention to the just administration of his territory than to its expansion.²⁶

²⁵ Cf. *ASD* IV.1, 182, l. 524–528; translation Cheshire and Heath, *CWE* 27, 253.

²⁶ Cf. *ASD* IV.1, 189, l. 742–746; translation Cheshire and Heath, *CWE* 27, 260.

Erasmus is well aware that it is impossible to dispense with taxes completely, so he recommends the prince to levy them in such way that the rich take the larger part of the burden, for instance by imposing levies on imported luxury products, which are purchased by the rich only. On the other hand, as little taxes as possible should be extracted from wheat, bread, beer, wine, or clothes, and other necessities of life, which the poor need as well. The prince is warned to be honest in the coinage of money. Moreover, he must adopt an attitude of generosity towards his subjects in an impartial way and 'this should be the reward of virtue, not the result of a whim'. He should also be forthcoming towards foreigners and make sure that no harm befalls them.

A good and upright prince is also some kind of embodiment of the laws. The laws he is enacting should not be limited to punishing misdemeanours, but must prevent the committing of offences and promise rewards for public services. Any suspicion of profit seeking or favouritism should be avoided and 'everything should be related to an ideal standard of honour and to the public interest'. The prince must surround himself with competent and conscious ministers and counsellors, carefully selected not for outward appearances, but rather for their moral assets. In concluding treaties as well he must always have in mind the prosperity of his country and strive for peace. The happiness and well-being of his subjects must prevail over the expansion of his country. Although marriage alliances are partly a private affair, it is preferable to choose a partner within the boundaries of his realm or in a neighbouring kingdom. In the final chapters Erasmus argues strongly in favour of peace, a theme that keeps cropping up in his works and his correspondence. Arms must only be taken up after careful deliberation, when all other attempts have failed, for all wars bring about a tide of calamities and misery for both the enemy and the citizens. Moreover, armed conflicts soon tend to escalate and leave ever-increasing marks of bloodshed and violence. Some years before, Erasmus had made a similar plea in favour of peace in one of his longest and most famous adages, "Dulce bellum inexpertis" ("War is sweet for those who have not tried it", *Adage* IV. 1, 1), and he would hark back to this theme in the *Querela pacis* (*Complaint of Peace*, published in 1517).

3.2. *Lipsius*

With the third book of his *Politica*, Lipsius turns to the second pillar of civil life, *prudentia*, which is indispensable for good government, for without it strength and wealth are useless. The three are to be intermingled, but Prudence prevails. Prudence is twofold, that of the prince himself and

that of others. As it is rare, even impossible that a ruler has sufficient wisdom of his own, he must seek helpers, whom he has to select with utmost care. Next Lipsius distinguishes two categories, counsellors and ministers, both to be defined and their usefulness explained.

Counsellors will help mostly with their words and their thinking. Their chief assets are *probitas* (integrity) and *peritia rerum* (experience), their main duty is offering sound advice, a task advanced by piety, independency, constancy, modesty, and discretion, but thwarted by arrogance, disagreement, emotions, greed, self-assurance and rashness. Then the author focuses on the prince again and how he must behave in hearing counsel: he should deliberate well in advance, listen carefully, without prejudice or obstinacy. He should hide his own views and encourage his helpers to speak freely. He should not oppose Fate. Secret advice and consultations of courtiers are to be rejected.

Ministers are chosen for specific tasks, either in public or in private. The latter category, that of men who render services in the palace, is of no further importance; the former assist the prince with ruling or in administration and are allotted specific tasks, matching their talents and skills. They should be of good descendancy, with the exception of extraordinary virtuous individuals, and have an unblemished reputation. Lower officials must be subservient, obliging, and courageous; more important ones efficient, quick and modest, not haughty. They must show endurance and caution, and leave the credits for their achievements to the prince. They should also be aware that authority in court is unstable.

With book four Lipsius switches to what is called 'propria prudentia', statecraft, or prudence which the prince himself is expected to show and which can have consequences for strengthening or weakening the realm. As it covers a wide area, it is uncertain and veiled, hence Lipsius does not claim to fully discuss it. Distinction must be made between prudence in civil and in military life. The former, which is the subject of book four, is divided into human and divine matters. As usual, Lipsius begins by explaining the second element, an aspect which was never really under discussion with Erasmus, who only kept emphasizing the idea that an excellent ruler should follow God's example as closely as possible. Of course, when Erasmus wrote his *Institutio Principis Christiani*, Luther had not yet nailed his theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, thus initiating the Protestant Reformation. Conversely, Lipsius's time had witnessed years of bloodshed and the most cruel atrocities in the name of true Faith all over what had been Catholic Europe in Erasmus's days.

According to Lipsius, religion is an important part of the prince's task: he must preserve unity of religion and defend it. He is utterly convinced of the principle *cuius regio, illius religio*, as it was developed in the Peace of Augsburg (1555): it is the prince's duty to decide in this matter and make his populace concede. Nevertheless, Lipsius formulated his ideas in a general way, without suggesting that the sovereign should *ipso facto* opt for Catholicism or without the merest hint of partiality, thus provoking the ire of Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert, among others, who insisted that Lipsius should speak out on this matter. Public dissent – i. e. citizens who stand up for their deviant opinion on God and religion, and encourage others to follow them – should not go unpunished, lest the prince be harmed because of them. This is especially the case if they are causing disorder. There is no place for clemency here, which is confirmed by the notorious reference to Cicero: 'Ure, seca, ut membrorum potius aliquod quam totum corpus intereat' ('Burn, cut, in order that some member perish rather than the whole body').²⁷ The phrase was, in fact, a figure of speech, borrowed from medical language, and referring to physicians who have recourse to amputation or cauterisation in order to heal the patient. Yet, it provoked a fierce reaction from Coornhert, who claimed that Lipsius was defending the Spanish inquisition with its appalling practices of torture and sending people to the stake. Only when suppressing troublemakers might cause major turmoil (here Lipsius was clearly referring to contemporary events) should the prince postpone his actions, as is confirmed by Livy, XXII, 18, 9: 'for physicians too sometimes achieve more by inactivity than by taking action'. He has to consider every occurrence separately and decide whether it is not better to close an eye, rather than provoking misdemeanour and even turmoil by untimely reactions. Individuals, however, who were living quietly and keeping their ideas to themselves, should not be punished, nor should they be searched for too much and submitted to thorough questioning. Prosecution would only lead to dissimulation; it was better to convince them by teaching and guiding ('docendi et ducendi') for, as Bernardus said,²⁸ 'Fides suadenda est, not imperanda' ('Faith must be induced by persuasion, not by command'). It comes as no surprise that these chapters in particular caused the *Politica* to be put on Sixtus V's index of forbidden books, at least provisionally,

²⁷ Cf. Cicero, *Philippics* 8, 5, 15: 'In corpore si quid eiusmodi est, quod relinquo corpori noceat, id uri secarique patimur, ut membrum aliquod potius quam totum corpus intereat. Sic in rei publicae corpore ut totum salvum sit, quicquid est pestiferum amputetur'.

²⁸ *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* 66, 12.

'donec corrigatur' and were, indeed, corrected heavily for the expurgated edition from 1596 onwards.²⁹

In chapter five, Lipsius passes to statecraft in wordly affairs, which will profit by understanding the nature of one's citizens and of kingship. Yet whereas Erasmus encouraged the prince to become thoroughly acquainted with his subjects in his third chapter, Lipsius focuses entirely on the shortcomings of the great mass of a country's citizens and that of neighbouring countries as well, since the sovereign often has to deal with them. Inquiry, practical experience, and reading books will teach the prince that the masses, and even mankind in general, are fickle, affected by emotions, devoid of judgement, jealous, suspicious, credulous, and hot-tempered, indifferent to the common weal. They are valiant in words only, prone to chaos and excesses. The humanist's characterisation of monarchy in chapter six is not very encouraging either: it is liable to fate, hatred, fear, rivalry, hazards from lack of self-control or conspiracies.

In the chapters seven to nine, Lipsius expounds on the need for practical strength and princely virtue as beneficent factors for a stable and thriving realm. A sovereign needs soldiers as body-guards and to form a (small) standing army; he also needs strongholds, be it castles or colonies. Appropriate virtuous behaviour will prove even more salutary, for it will result in goodwill from his subjects and authority. The former is provoked by generosity, a moderate indulgency, and benefactions. Authority is based on awe and fear. Conversely, violence and princely misbehaviour will cause kingdoms to be overthrown, as he explains in a matching set of three chapters. Violence leads to conspiracies and treason; princely vices such as cruelty, greed, and obstinacy will cause hatred which is to be avoided at all costs, or contempt. Hence the prince should shun and abhor harsh punishment, greedy taxation, and obduracy, nor should he be too lenient or wavering.

²⁹ Cf. Reusch F.H., *Der Index der Verbotenen Bücher. Ein Beitrag zur Kirchen- und Literaturgeschichte*, 2 vols. (Bonn: 1883–1885) 501–531 (on the *Index* of Sixtus V) and 532–538 (on its revised version by Clement VIII). See on this matter Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica* 120–124. The reaction of Spanish bookcensors on the *Politica* (or its Spanish translation by Bernardino de Mendoza, *Los seys libros de las Políticas* de Bernardino de Mendoza (Madrid: 1604) is discussed by Pérez A.D., "La recepción española de las *Políticas* de Lipsio en el siglo XVII: la traducción castellana de Bernardino de Mendoza (Madrid: 1604) y la expurgación de la obra en los índices inquisitoriales", in De Landtsheer J. – Delsaerdt P. (eds.), *Iam illustravit omnia. Justus Lipsius als lievelingsauteur van het Plantijnse Huis*, Gulden Passer 84 (Antwerp: 2006) 103–126.

To conclude his views on statecraft in worldly affairs Lipsius dwells upon the use of deceit, in which he discerns three categories: light (distrust, dissimulation), middle (corruption, deception), and grave (breach of faith, injustice). In his eyes the lighter type can be accepted and even recommended, the middle one tolerated, whereas the third kind is definitely forbidden. In fact, he adds, corruption, breach of faith, and injustice are also forbidden by Scripture.

Books five and six as well show how much Lipsius was affected by the often atrocious contemporary events, which he had either lived through or had heard and read about. In this section of the *Politica* he expounds on military prudence, which is needed in two types of war, first and foremost against other countries (book five), but unfortunately also in cases of civil discord (book six). It is nevertheless indispensable for the defence and the safeguard of a realm. Before coming to the point, Lipsius strongly asserts that no war should ever be started for unjust reasons. Moreover, to quote Waszink's summing up of the arguments: 'A just war must be declared by the prince himself, either to defend himself and others who are in danger, or to invade for the sake of revenge, or invade savages'.³⁰ Lipsius, as well as Erasmus in the final chapter of his *Institutio Principis Christiani*, "De bello suscipiendo" ("On Starting War"),³¹ strongly asserts that before taking up arms, every possible legal solution or negotiation should be attempted. A war must never be started rashly, but only after careful planning. The prince should also keep in mind its dire consequences for winners and losers alike, and the profits of a possible victory will never compensate for the costs, the bloodshed, the physical and mental suffering, and the material losses.

In the next chapters of the fifth book Lipsius discusses at length how troops should be carefully recruited and the need of discipline, which is imperative (chapters 7–13). Before entering into this discussion he makes a digression, lashing out against the armies of his time, which he brands as bands of robbers and cowards, the scum of their towns, averse to any form of discipline.³² The prince is recommended to have a rather modest stand-

³⁰ Cf. Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica* 210.

³¹ Cf. ASD IV.1, 213–219.

³² In fact, he also gave vent to similar remarks or complaints in his correspondence, see, e.g., *ILE* II, 85 06 28 LE to his former student Theodorus Leeuwius (1548–1596), one of his former students and later councillor at the Court of Holland. [*ILE* II = *Iusti Lipsi Epistolae, pars II: 1584–1587*, ed. M.A. Nauwelaerts and S. Sué (Brussels: 1983)] This letter is discussed in De Landtsheer J., "L'évolution politique aux Pays-Bas du Nord après

ing army of some 6000 infantry and some 1200 cavalry (the numbers apply to a realm of medium size), but he should also be able to raise an auxiliary army of about 30,000 to 40,000 footmen recruited from men who normally live by other means. Native soldiers are preferable to mercenaries from abroad, for they will be cheaper, more loyal and obedient.³³ In the chapter on discipline Lipsius makes reference to the army practice of the Romans, whose example should be followed.³⁴ He distinguishes four parts: training (with regard to the use of weapons, battle order, the long and often exhausting daily marches, and the tasks and duties involved in camp life), maintaining order in the camps and during marches, imposing restraints by all kinds of rules, and examples either by punishment or rewards. A reworked and much elaborated version of these chapters was published six years later as the fifth book of *De militia Romana*, on Roman army practice, conceived as a commentary to Polybius's *Histories*, VI, 19–42.³⁵ Lipsius not only intended this treatise as a general introduction to warfare for scholars focused on ancient history, but also hoped to provide the modern commanders-in-chief with some useful suggestions for the organisation of their own army and battles.

Chapters 14–17 deal with the commanders of higher and lower rank (with the warning that there should be only one general in a war, the sovereign), the importance of good strategy and planning, and the possible use of stratagems and cunning. Lipsius concludes his advice about waging war against other nations by giving his opinion on how a Prince

1584", in Laurence P. – Guillaumont F. (eds.), *L'histoire dans l'épistolaire* (Tours: 2011) [forthcoming].

³³ Cf. the summary of Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica* 210–211. Erasmus does not warn explicitly against mercenaries in his *Institutio*, but he often severely criticizes them in his *Colloquies* and *Adages*.

³⁴ At the beginning of the fifth book, Lipsius had pointed out that his familiarity with the ancient historians made up for his lack of practical experience and entitled him to speak with understanding and judgement.

³⁵ *Iusti Lipsi de militia Romana libri quinque. Commentarius ad Polybium. E parte prima historicae facis* (Antwerp, Widow of Plantin and Johannes Moretus: 1595–1596). On the *editio princeps* and later editions, see *BBr*, vol. III, 1002–1005 (L-369–75). On this treatise, see De Landtsheer J., "Justus Lipsius' *De militia Romana*: Polybius Revived, or How an Ancient Historian was turned into a Manual of Early Modern Warfare", in Enenkel K.A.E. – de Jong J.L. – De Landtsheer J. (eds.), *Recreating Ancient History. Episodes from the Greek and Roman Past in the Arts and Literature of the Early Modern Period*, Intersections. Yearbook for Early Modern Studies, 1 (Leiden-Boston-London: 2001) 101–122. Once returned to the Spanish Low Countries (August 1592), Lipsius was time and again confronted with plundering and mutinying soldiers, who exacted levies under threat all over the countryside south of Brussels and Leuven, where he had inherited some estates from his parents, hence the exceptional length of the fifth book of *De militia*.

should conduct himself to his advantage and honour either in victory or defeat, and an urgent exhortation to agree upon a peace that is honest and honourable for both sides (chapters 18–20).

With the much shorter book six, on civil war, Lipsius discusses an issue, which is absent in Erasmus's *Institutio Principis Christiani*. It is defined as 'a war in which subjects take up arms against their sovereign or among each other' and characterized as an appalling plague and 'a sea of disasters' for any country.³⁶ With the former part of the definition, Lipsius is obviously referring to the rebellion within the Low Countries against King Philip II, which had been going on for more than twenty years when the *Politica* appeared.³⁷ With the latter part he is reminding his readership of the religious wars among Catholics and Huguenots in France, which would break out with great fierceness again after the murder of Henry III († 1 August 1589), when his *Politica* was already in press. In chapters 2–5 the causes of civil war are defined and explained and possible solutions suggested. Next follows a rather long excursion on the question of whether a good man should take part in civil war. After giving arguments and examples of both alternatives, Lipsius concludes that one should always opt for peace and avoid civil war. Yet, a public person, involved in politics, cannot merely limit his commitment to peace time, but has to devote himself to his country and might thus become involved in the conflict. A common citizen, however, has no reason whatsoever to choose sides and to involve himself suddenly in strife. The final chapter, on ending civil war, advises to accept any peace, even if it seems unreliable. The delay gives time and may cause spirits to settle down. It also gives an opportunity to send the leaders of a rebellion away, to start a war abroad in order to strengthen internal concord, and soothe spirits by showing clemency. The *Politica* ends with a prayer to God for peaceful and wise sovereigns, thus matching the final address of Erasmus to Charles V in the *Institutio Principis Christiani*.

³⁶ Cf. *Politica*, VI, § 1: 'Arma subditorum in Principem mota, aut inter sese' (Lipsius, *Politica* ed. Waszink 666. 'Mare calamitatum' as Lipsius describes it (ibidem), is a variant of *Adage* I, 3, 28 "mare malorum").

³⁷ Until well in the seventeenth century documents from the Spanish Netherlands usually consider the endless campaigns against the Northern Provinces as a civic war. This is especially clear in *ILE* VIII, 95 02 02 S, a letter in which Lipsius gives his opinion about the policy the Spanish king should adopt towards France, England, and the Northern Provinces. [*ILE* VIII = *Iusti Lipsi Epistolae, pars VIII: 1595*, ed. J. De Landtsheer (Brussels: 2004)] But in numerous other letters as well he often deplores the stubbornness of the 'rebels in the North' who refuse obedience to their legitimate king.

Conclusion

At the end of this article there remains the question of dependency: did Lipsius know Erasmus's *Institutio principis*, and if so, in what way did it influence his *Politica*. As already pointed out by Jan Waszink, 'the name of Lipsius' great predecessor is never mentioned in the *Politica*',³⁸ nor is the *Institutio principis* listed in the catalogue of Lipsius's books drawn up in the days following his death.³⁹ However, this does not mean that the treatise was unknown to the Leiden humanist. The main reason for this remarkable absence of both the author's name in the *Politica* and the book in Lipsius's library is undoubtedly the ambiguous status of Erasmus in Catholic areas. In 1559 Pope Paul IV had consigned Erasmus's whole oeuvre to the *Index librorum prohibitorum* and although his successor, Pius IV, had mitigated this decision in his so called *Index of the Tridentine Council* (1564) by agreeing that most of the works (although not the *Encomium Moriae* and the *Colloquia*) could be read after being approved by Catholic theologians, this still meant that numerous passages from the *Institutio principis* were censured [Fig. 5].⁴⁰ Lipsius was still living in Leiden when he wrote his *Politica*, hence he did not have to worry about the copy of the *Institutio* he used, but once he had decided to return to the Spanish Netherlands, he had to be careful about the books he kept in his library. Moreover, since his works aimed at a readership all over Europe, he had to be cautious not to refer overtly or frequently to sources which were might raise suspicion in Catholic minds. Despite Pope Pius IV's revocation of his predecessor's decision, Erasmus was still *persona non grata* in Catholic circles and references to him would only have had a weakening effect on Lipsius's argumentation.

³⁸ Cf. § 4.2.11, "The *Politica* and Erasmus", in Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica* 113.

³⁹ Cf. its legalized copy in Leiden, University Library, ms. Lips. 59, which, together with Marcus de Schepper I am preparing for publication. This document, however, mentions a copy of Jean Bodin's *Les six livres de la République* (Paris, Jacques Du Puys: 1576) in its Latin translation published (Paris, Jacques Du Puys: 1586), cf. fol. 5r, book 9). Bodin's *De re publica* does not occur in the *Politica* either, although it is referred to in the correspondence.

⁴⁰ Cf. Waszink (ed.), Lipsius, *Politica* 113, no. 113 and his reference to Vanautgaerde A., art. "Institutio principis", in Soly H. – Van de Wiele J., *Carolus. Keizer Karel V 1500–1558* (Ghent: 1999) 204–205. This same rigorous restriction also concerned the *Adages*, in which Erasmus had already formulated the major part of his ideas about good government, which he afterwards gathered in the *Institutio*. Lipsius owned a copy of the "Tridentine" edition of the *Adagia*, largely prepared by Paulo Manuzio: his library catalogue mentions *Adagiorum Desiderii Erasmi, [...] emendatae et secundum concilii Tridentini decretum expurgatae* [...] (Paris, Nicolas Chesneau: 1571), cf. Leiden, Univ. Lib., ms. 59, fol. 4v, book 5.



Figure 5. Censured pages of Erasmus, *Institutio principis Christiani* (Basle: Johann Froben, 1516). Anderlecht, Erasmushuis, Inv.nr. E 412.

Both Erasmus and Lipsius derived their portrait of an exemplary Prince from the political theories of Antiquity, although they expressed their ideas in a completely different way. They show their familiarity with a long line of classical authors and also with the Fathers. Historiographers in particular were a welcome source for Erasmus to enhance his ideas with either positive or negative examples. Lipsius would do the same some years later, in his *Monita et exempla politica* (Antwerp, Johannes Moretus: 1605), a work in which he systematically repeats the theories of books I and II of the *Politica*, illustrating each chapter with numerous anecdotes, either warnings or examples. In his *Politica* his profound knowledge of ancient literature is shown in an authoritative way by formulating his thoughts through a string of quotations, in which Tacitus plays the main part. Although he quotes a number of authors and works occurring in the *Institutio*⁴¹ and sometimes also in the *Adages* (in a rare case even adding the reference *Adag[ia]* in the margin, without specifying that he meant Erasmus's *Adagia*), he did not need Erasmus's work to become acquainted with the ideas vented in his primary sources, since

⁴¹ It has been pointed out that Lipsius used Tacitus as his main source, an author not so frequently present in Erasmus's works, and not at all in the *Institutio*.

editions of authors from Antiquity, both Greek and Latin, had become easily available by the time he was writing his *Politica*. He surely browsed through the most important texts for his subject and, as always, excerpted an impressive collection of *sententiae* or *loci communes*.

Both treatises roughly follow the same structure, and this is the aspect that shows Erasmus's influence on Lipsius most clearly. As both authors interpret government as a hereditary monarchy, the *Institutio* and the *Politica* begin with an analysis of the assets a sovereign has in common with all virtuous and upright men (*virtutes*) before focusing on the specific tasks of a prince or, by extension, of every ruler (*prudentia*). The *Institutio Principis Christiani*, however, partly resuming the theories elaborated in *De pueris instituendis*, pays much attention to the pedagogical aspect of how an infant prince should be raised into an exemplary adult. Both authors warn their prince repeatedly to be wary of flatterers; they stress the importance of choosing capable, wise, and honest counsellors and aides who should be free to vent their opinion; they underline the importance of justice and clemency, and of reasonableness in collecting taxes and tolls. A sovereign's majesty and reputation is not determined by the length of his pedigree or his retinue, nor by expensive garments, sparkling gems, or a sumptuous way of life, but by his modesty and probity. A ruler should act towards his subjects as a father towards his children or a shepherd towards his flock. His only purpose should be the happiness and prosperity of all his subjects, rather than personal wealth and idle glory. The sovereign should always keep in mind that he is God's representative on earth; for Erasmus the pious king is ipso facto a *Catholic* king, whereas Lipsius, who is living in entirely different political and religious times and with part of his readership no longer adhering to the Catholic creed, does not specify to which religion the sovereign should adhere. They repeatedly launch urgent appeals in favour of a stable and honest peace, condemning warfare as an ultimate resort, when all other approaches have failed. As already mentioned in the analysis, the military aspect, with the organisation of the army in particular and its need for strong discipline, is discussed at length by Lipsius.

Contemporary history is present as well, although in quite a different way. Erasmus mentions events from his own time only occasionally and without elaborating, for example, his cautious criticism on the long and expensive travels of Charles's father, Philip the Fair, (§ 3 and 4) and his lengthy war against Gelderland (§ 3), the conflict between James IV and his brother-in-law Henry VIII (§ 9), the spring tides repeatedly sweeping the coasts of Holland and Zeeland at the beginning of the sixteenth

century or the war between Pope Julius II and King Louis XII of France (§ 10), and finally the increasing conflicts between Christians and Ottomans (§ 11). Lipsius, on the contrary, was much more strongly influenced than Erasmus by what was happening throughout Europe,⁴² as is also revealed in their correspondence. Not only did he show a much more marked interest in this subject than his predecessor; he was also living in an age that had witnessed the violence and bloodshed caused by religious or political dissensions throughout Europe, e.g. the infamous St Bartholomew's Day Massacre (24 August 1572). The turmoil in his native country had persuaded him to seek a safer harbour in the Northern Provinces, but after the Fall of Antwerp (August 1585) he became aware that the climate of religious tolerance was gradually changing, even provoking more and more tension between various Protestant creeds. Hence his insistence on unity of religion, as determined by the sovereign in book four, his urgent plea for a limited, efficient, and well-disciplined army in book five, and his warning against civil discord in book six.

Finally, Erasmus dedicated his *Institutio Principis Christiani* to Charles V and through him to all sovereigns and men of power. Lipsius, on the other hand, dedicated his treatise in a more general way to 'the Emperor, kings, and sovereigns'. Yet, one may wonder whether he too did not see his *Politica* as personal advice, viz., to Maurice of Nassau (1567–1625), who was studying in Leiden, when the murder of William the Silent on 10 July 1584 abruptly put an end to the life he had so much enjoyed.⁴³ At that time Maurice still lacked his father's authority and the experience to keep the States in check and they eventually took over the government. Lipsius's correspondence of the next years indicates that he had little faith in a political system that entrusted power entirely to the States General. He was convinced that a state needed only one strong, capable leader, just as there should be only one captain of a ship or one general of an army. Hence his *Politica* might well have been an encouragement to his former student to stand up and demand the heritage he was entitled to [Fig. 6].

⁴² His correspondence clearly shows his insatiable interest in this aspect.

⁴³ In *IIE* II, 84 o8 29 Maurice thanks Lipsius for his letter [of condolence, one can presume, since it has not been preserved] and expresses his sincere regret at no longer being able to follow his lectures. He also informs him that he has begun to study geometry and is starting to read Lipsius's *De Constantia*, which will mentally prepare him against the troubles in the Low Countries.

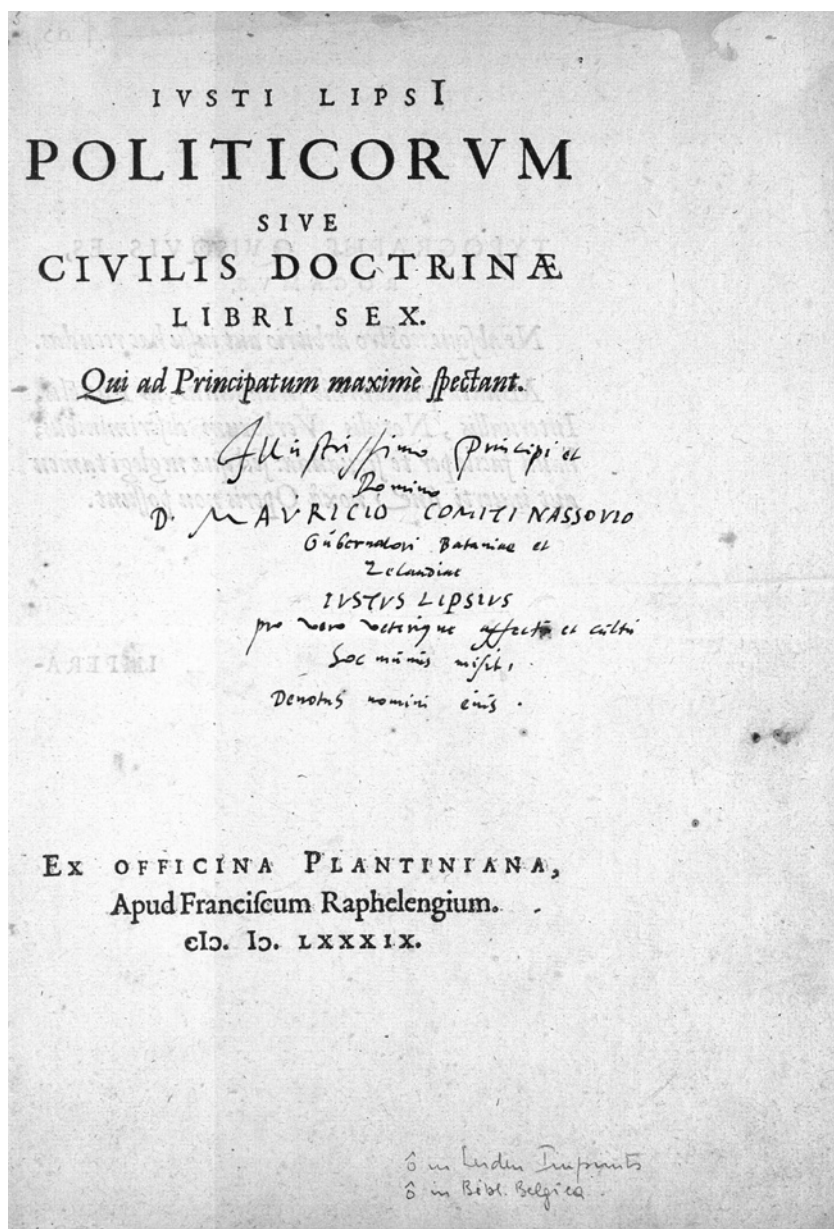


Figure 6. Lipsius's autograph dedication of a copy of the *Politica* to Maurice of Nassau on a loose title page without printer's mark: 'Illustrissimo Principi et Domino, D[omino] MAURICIO, COMITI NASSOVIO, Gubernatori Bataviae et Zelandiae IUSTUS LIPSIVS pro vero veterique affectu et cultu hoc munus misit, devotus nomini eius'. Leuven, University Library, BRES, autographs (16th century).

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PART IV

RABELAISIAN SATIRE, TRIUMPH, DIALOGUE AND OTHER
ADAPTATIONS: RECEPTIONS OF *THE PRAISE OF FOLLY*
IN FRENCH, ITALIAN AND DUTCH LITERATURE

JEAN THENAUD AND FRANÇOIS RABELAIS:
SOME HYPOTHESES ON THE EARLY RECEPTION
OF ERASMUS IN FRENCH VERNACULAR LITERATURE*

Paul J. Smith

Due to the humanist activities around the French royal court from 1515 onwards, Erasmus was a well-established, albeit not uncontroversial figure in French vernacular literature by 1530. The road to Erasmus's popularity in France was paved by the royal educator François Demoulins (or Du Moulin) de Rochefort, who, already in 1517, invited Erasmus to come to France on behalf of the King – an invitation declined by Erasmus, but twice renewed in 1523 and 1524 by the same Demoulins and by Guillaume Budé. It is in this context of royal interest for Erasmus that the works of two important authors originated, namely François Rabelais and Jean Thenaud. The present study proposes to consider these authors in their interrelationship, and more specifically in their interplay in the reception of Erasmus.

Rabelais and Erasmus

Rabelais is certainly one of the most spectacular disciples of Erasmus, although his precise Erasmian roots remain partly obscure. Let us begin by summarising what is already known about Rabelais's reception of Erasmus. Although Erasmus is never mentioned by name in Rabelais's five comic novels about the giants Gargantua and Pantagruel, published between 1532 and, posthumously, 1565, he is one of Rabelais's main sources. This can be illustrated by the following significant examples. The adage "Sileni Alcibiadis" is at the basis of Rabelais's most commented text, his Prologue to *Gargantua*. Erasmus's *Enchiridion militis christiani* and his *Institutio principis Christiani* are echoed in the educational chapters of the books *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*. In Rabelais's chapters on warfare, one finds Erasmus's condemnation of war, 'which must never be undertaken

* I wish to thank Ann-Marie Hansen for her careful revision of this article.

until everything else has been tried'.¹ The colloquy "Peregrinatio" inspired Rabelais's pilgrim-episode in *Gargantua*, whereas another colloquy, "Naufragium", is one of the main sources of Rabelais's storm-episode in his *Fourth Book*. Edwin Duval recently pointed to the importance of the colloquies "Funus" and "Ichthyophagia" for chapters 21 and 30 of Rabelais's *Third Book*.² And since Walter Kaiser's seminal study *Praisers of Folly* (1963),³ Rabelais's debt to Erasmus's *Laus Stultitiae*, especially in his *Third Book*, is beyond any doubt.

Another authoritative book on Rabelais, written by Michael Screech (1979),⁴ identifies no less than 45 Erasmian adages found in Rabelais, and recent editions and studies of his works increase this number substantially. In Rabelais's writing, the Erasmian adage, just as other proverbial material, functions as a pre-existing kernel element, a so-called hypogram, from which the texts unfolds.⁵ Besides the above mentioned "Sileni Alcibiadis", one might think of such well-known adages as "Festina lente", "Sus Minervam", "Venter auribus caret", "Dare verba", "Aliorum medicas", "Vento vivere", "In vino veritas", which are the basis of whole episodes. In 1532 Rabelais wrote his letter to Erasmus, whom he famously called his intellectual 'father and mother'. This letter – the only one he wrote to Erasmus, and to which he never received a reply – is important, as I have demonstrated elsewhere,⁶ because it shows Rabelais's implication in the so-called Battle of the Ciceronians – in which Rabelais chose to side with the Erasmians against Julius Caesar Scaliger, and attempting at the same time to mitigate some irritations of Budé, who found himself

¹ This quotation, as well as some of the examples mentioned here, are given by Heath M.J., "Erasmus, Desiderius (1609–1536)", in Zegura E.C. (ed.), *The Rabelais Encyclopedia* (Westport, Connecticut-London: 2004) 70–71.

² Duval E., "Putting religion in its place", in O'Brien J. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Rabelais* (Cambridge: 2010) (93–106) 101.

³ Kaiser W., *Praisers of Folly. Erasmus – Rabelais – Shakespeare* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1964).

⁴ Screech M.A., *Rabelais* (Ithaca, New York: 1979) 487.

⁵ 'Hypogrammatic derivation occurs when the verbal sequence patterns itself upon word groups which preexist in the language', Riffaterre M., "Semantic Overdetermination in Poetry", *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 2 (1977) (1–19) 2, quoted by Rigolot F., *Le texte de la Renaissance. Des Rhétoriciens à Montaigne* (Geneva: 1982) 129. For its application to Rabelais, see my article "'Croquer pie'. *Quart Livre*, Ancien Prologue", in Bideaux M. (ed.), *Rabelais – Dionysos. Vin, Carnaval, Ivresse* (Marseille: 1997) 97–108.

⁶ See my article "Correspondance et stratégie d'auteur: les lettres de François Rabelais", in De Landtsheer J. – Nellen H. (eds.), *Between Scylla and Charybdis. Learned letter writers navigating the reefs of religious and political controversy in early modern Europe* (Leiden-Boston: 2011) (69–90) esp. 79–84.

treated disrespectfully by Erasmus in his *Ciceronianus*. And finally, one of the most characteristic aspects of Rabelais's Erasmianism lies in his predilection for the work of Lucian, which was partly translated into Latin by Erasmus in collaboration with his friend Thomas More. For Rabelais's first readers, Lucian's satire and wit were the *tertium comparationis* that linked his with Erasmus.⁷

All of this implies that Rabelais was very well acquainted with Erasmus's work, and that this was the case well before 1530 – the date before which little is known about him. It is regarding this period, unknown and yet crucial in the development of French reception of Erasmus, that I would like to propose some hypotheses.

Let me first give some biographical information,⁸ necessary for my argument. Rabelais was likely born in 1483 in the neighbourhood of Chinon near Tours. We do not know anything about his studies, but in 1511 he became a Franciscan and in 1520 he was in the Franciscan House at Fontenay-le-Comte. From 1520 onwards, he was in correspondence with Guillaume Budé, who complimented him on his knowledge of Greek. In 1523 his Greek books were confiscated by his superiors. Although his books were later returned to him – we know this from one of Budé's letters – the changing attitude of the Franciscans towards humanism was the reason for which Rabelais changed religious orders, and entered the order of the Benedictines, in the Priory of Maillezais in Poitou. There he translated Herodotus, Book II, into Latin, as was reported by the humanist André Tiraqueau, and also some of Lucian's writings, as was reported in 1529 by the erudite Carmelite Pierre de Lille. No translation of Lucian by Rabelais has survived, but the following brief mention of it by Pierre de Lille is interesting for our argument:

Videamus philosophos in naturae principiis multum discordantes, quia homines, de genesi deorum magis, de sectis philosophiae maxime. Ut videre in Luciano secundum translationem Rabelesii monachi maleacensis.⁹

We may see that philosophers are very discordant about the principles of nature, because they are human beings, even more about the origin of the

⁷ This is also true for Voltaire, who in 1765 published his *Conversation de Lucien, Erasme et Rabelais dans les Champs Élysées*.

⁸ The most recent biography of Rabelais, containing much new information, is: Huchon M., *Rabelais* (Paris: 2011).

⁹ Quoted by Secret F., "Un humaniste oublié, le carme Bourbonnais, Pierre de Lille", in *L'humanisme français au début de la Renaissance. Colloque international de Tours (XIV^e stage)* (Paris: 1973) (207–223) 222.

gods, and mostly about the different sects of philosophy. As we can see in Lucian, according to the translation by Rabelais, monk of Maillezaïs.

Unfortunately this description is too vague to point to a specific work of Lucian's; it could apply to Lucian's *Icaromenippus*, a dialogue that is referred to in Rabelais's works, but this text had already been translated by Erasmus long before and was published in 1514 by the Parisian printer Josse Bade.¹⁰ It could also apply to another work by Lucian, extremely important for Rabelais, namely *A True History*, but the humanist Pierre de Lille (and Rabelais) would most certainly have been aware of the well-known Latin translation of this text by Poggio, published in Venice in 1494,¹¹ and republished in the interim. Indeed, by that time, almost all of Lucian's works had been translated into Latin, and frequently published. It is therefore not impossible that Pierre de Lille was referring to a French translation by Rabelais. A French translation of Lucian would most definitely have been worth mentioning, since both *Icaromenippus* and *A True History* were translated and published only in 1529.¹² and Lucian's other works even later than that. The intellectual Poitevin circles to which Pierre de Lille and Rabelais belonged in that period were humanist, but at least partly communicating in French, judging from their correspondence.¹³ In any case, in the twenties Rabelais not only seemed to have a reputation as a *Graecus*, but moreover as a specialist of Lucian. At the end of this article, I will return to this point.

For what reason did Rabelais, who seemed to have a keen interest in learning, join the order of the Franciscans, who had a bad reputation in the domain of learning and scholarship? My hypothesis is that Rabelais was drawn to them by the person of Jean Thenaud, a learned Franciscan, and early Erasmian, who probably acted as a mentor for Rabelais during his Franciscan years. As I presume that the figure of Thenaud is virtually unknown to most readers – despite having been a translator of Erasmus, he does not figure in Bietenholtz and Deutscher's *Contemporaries of Erasmus*¹⁴ –, I will provide some information about his life and works.¹⁵

¹⁰ Lauvergnat-Gagnière C., *Lucien de Samosate et le lucianisme en France au XVI^e siècle. Athéisme et polémique* (Geneva: 1988) 381, no. 2043.

¹¹ Ibidem, 371, no. 2002.

¹² *Icaromenippus* was translated into French by Geofroy Tory and *A True History* by Simon Bourgoing. See Lauvergnat-Gagnière, *Lucien de Samosate* 371, no. 4001 and 4003.

¹³ For a synthetic survey, see Huchon, *Rabelais* 90–103.

¹⁴ Bietenholtz P.G. – Deutscher T.B. (eds.), *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, 3 vols. (Toronto-Buffalo-London: 1985–1987).

¹⁵ The most current information about Thenaud's life and works can be found in the introductions by Titia Schuurs-Janssen and René Stuip to their editions of Thenaud's

Thenaud, Rabelais and Erasmus

Jean Thenaud was probably born in 1474, and so was some ten years older than Rabelais. His tutor François Demoulins introduced him into the service of the French royal family. At the instigation of Queen Louise de Savoy, Thenaud made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land between 1511 and 1513. The account of this pilgrimage, entitled *Voyage d'outremer* (1530), is the only one of his works that was printed in his lifetime. His other works were published as precious manuscripts for the private use of the royal family. His most ambitious work was the *Triumphe des vertus*, of circa 1517, which is a monumental encyclopaedic allegory in prose, in four parts, written for the instruction of Louise's children: the future king François I and Marguerite de Navarre. Until very recently this work was only partly and indirectly known to sixteenth-century specialists, but this has changed since its edition by Titia Schuurs-Janssen and René Stuij: part 1 (*Triumphe de Prudence*) in 1997, part 2 (*Triumphe de Force*) in 2002, part 3 (*Triumphe de Justice*) in 2007, and part 4 (*Triumphe de Temperance*) in 2010.¹⁶ The first part, the *Triumphe de Prudence*, is a crucial text in the reception of Erasmus, because it contains the first French translation (or rather adaptation) of the *Praise of Folly*. This is the reason why, of the four parts, this first *Triumphe* will receive the most attention in the present article. Three different versions of the first two *Triumphes* exist, which Schuurs-Janssen and Stuij have dated quite precisely. In chronological order, the St Petersburg manuscript dates from the summer of 1517, the manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France dates from the spring of 1518, and that of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal – the text on which the modern edition is based – is from the spring of 1523.

The lengthy first *Triumphe* (277 pages in the modern edition) narrates an allegorical journey, embedded in the traditional framework of a dream, and is, at the same time, an encyclopaedic compendium. The narrator, who calls himself 'Pilgrim' or 'Explorer', is searching for knowledge and wisdom, personified by dame Prudence, who in reality represents Louise de Savoy. In his dream, he arrives at wisdom by seven steps: the Garden

Triumphes. My references to these introductions will be indicated as follows: Schuurs-Janssen. – Stuij, "Introduction" (1997), (2002), (2007) or (2011). See the following note.

¹⁶ Thenaud J., *Le Triumphe des Vertuz. Premier traité. Le Triumphe de Prudence*, ed. T.J. Schuurs-Janssen – R.E.V. Stuij (Geneva: 1997); idem, *Le Triumphe des Vertuz. Second traité. Le Triumphe de Force*, ed. T.J. Schuurs-Janssen – R.E.V. Stuij (Geneva: 2002); idem, *Le Triumphe des Vertuz. Troisième traité. Le Triumphe de Justice*, ed. T.J. Schuurs-Janssen – R.E.V. Stuij (Geneva: 2007); idem, *Le Triumphe des Vertuz. Quatrième traité. Le Triumphe de Temperance*, ed. T.J. Schuurs-Janssen – R.E.V. Stuij (Geneva: 2010).

of Genesis, the Garden of Discipline, the Valley of Counsel, the Garden of Memory, the Garden of Intelligence, the Fortress of Providence, and the Mount of Sophie. At the end of his quest, the narrator-explorer, listens to a long *personificatio*, pronounced by Dame Folie, that is an adaptation of the *Praise of Folly*. At the end Dame Folie is chased away by Sophie, the daughter of Dame Prudence, who represents the princess Marguerite, the daughter of Louise de Savoy. It is after this that the Pilgrim awakes.

In his quest for wisdom, the narrator is guided by some twenty different people, most of them allegorical or historical or simply anonymous. There is one modern person: François Dumoulins, qualified as ‘mon precepteur’ (it is possible that Dumoulins had transmitted his appreciation of Erasmus to his pupil Thenaud); there is also a young person called Nazaire, who represents something that is often absent in Thenaud’s writings – at least in the first part¹⁷ –, namely humour. Nazaire shows the narrator the therapeutic virtue of comic vernacular literature: the importance of street theatre, as well as the importance of two names that would become icons of fifteenth-century French literature: the poet François Villon and the anonymous *Farce de Maître Pathelin*. Nazaire is the only named character lacking a historical or literary referent; he is also the only one towards whom the narrator demonstrates growing personal affection. This can be seen by comparing the three different versions of the text, which show an increasing level of affection:

ms. St Petersburg: summer 1517: ‘ung bon filz d’effect et de nom, lequel jadiz j’avoye congneu plus feal [que ne fut Damis a Appoloneus]’.

ms. BnF: spring 1518: ‘Nazaire, bon enfant d’effect et de nom, lequel jadiz j’avoye congneu plus feal [...]’.

ms. Arsenal: spring 1523: ‘Nazaire, bon enfant d’effect et de nom, mon bon ami, lequel jadiz j’avoye congneu plus feal [...]’.¹⁸

In collaboration with Titia Schuurs-Janssen, I have written an article about the character Nazaire.¹⁹ Our hypothesis is that Nazaire in fact represents the young François Rabelais whose anagram, used in his comical books as of 1532, was Alcofrybas Nasier. Nazaire is indeed related to Nasier as both

¹⁷ Thenaud’s wit comes to the fore in his numerous anecdotes and *exempla*, especially in his fourth *Triumphe*.

¹⁸ Thenaud, *Triumphe de Prudence* 78.

¹⁹ Smith P.J. – Schuurs-Janssen T.J., “‘Plus feal que ne fut Danis a Appoloneus’. Rabelais et Jean Thénau avant 1517: quelques hypothèses”, in Demonet M.-L. – Georget S. (eds.), *Les grands jours de Rabelais en Poitou* (Geneva: 2006) 183–194.

names can be derived from the Latin name *Nazarius*. Moreover, Nazaire and Nasier share an interest in comic literature. In particular, Rabelais greatly admired François Villon and added to his legendary afterlife,²⁰ and he must have known the *Farce de Maistre Pathelin* by heart, because he quoted from and referred to it more than 25 times in his work.²¹ This identification implies that the intellectual and successful Thenaud could have acted as a mentor for young Rabelais during his Franciscan years – and in turn Thenaud could have profited from young Rabelais's sense of humour, his preference for comic literature, and his knowledge of Greek, which Thenaud probably did not have himself. More specifically, Rabelais could have helped Thenaud with his readings of Lucian – as we shall see shortly.

Thenaud and the Praise of Folly

Let us now turn in greater detail to the presence of Erasmus in Thenaud's text. Erasmus is mentioned by name only once, and this occurs in the introductory marginal note of Dame Folie's discourse. The three versions of the manuscript present different readings:

ms. St-Petersburg: summer 1517: 'La est contenue la longue et ennuyeuse collacion que Folie faict de soyemesmes voulant prouver que tout le monde n'est que Folie et son escole'.

ms. BnF: spring 1518 and ms. Arsenal: spring 1523: 'La est contenue la longue et superbe louange et collacion que Folie faict de soyemesmes, prinse d'un traicté de celluy tresexcellent docteur Erasme qui decore et clarifie nostre siècle et eage sicomme le soleil faict le ciel, par laquelle elle veult prouver que tout cestuy monde n'est fors son theatre et deduyt'.²²

These quotations show an interesting hesitation regarding the word 'ennuyeux', meaning 'harmful', which immediately underscores that Thenaud presents the *Praise of Folly* in a problematic way. On the one hand, there is the recognition of Erasmus's comic wit. However, the allegorical, didactic framework does not permit any sophisticated kind of

²⁰ Harp M., "Panurge and the Villon Legend in Rabelais's *Quart Livre*", *Aevum* 3 (1996) 619–623 and idem, "Villon, François (1431–after 1463)", in Zegura E.C. (ed.), *The Rabelais Encyclopedia* (Westport, Connecticut-London: 2004) 257.

²¹ See Smith P.J. – Verhuyck P., "Rabelais en het toneel", *Rapports – Het Franse Boek* 59 (1989) 146–151.

²² Thenaud, *Triumphe de Prudence* 197.

ambiguity about the pernicious nature of Folly. Whereas Erasmus, at the end of his text, elevates his Folly to the mystical level of Pauline Folly and the Folly of the Cross, Thenaud condemns Folly by having her chased away by Dame Prudence.

In this one-dimensional simplification of Erasmus's text, Thenaud's *Triumphe de Prudence* corresponds with the first printed French translation of the *Praise of Folly* entitled *De la Declamation des Louanges de la Folie*, printed anonymously in 1520.²³ Although I have not found any interesting lexical correspondences between the two texts, both translations present this one-dimensional simplification of the original text. In the case of the printed translation, the last part of Erasmus's text has simply been omitted, and the whole translation has been put in the direct context of Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff*, in which there is no place for the paradoxical forms of spiritual folly. Indeed the translation is moulded in the layout of the *Narrenschiff*, and is even illustrated by Brant's woodcuts.

Another similarity between the two translations is that both show a Franciscan influence. Some of Erasmus's passages about mendicant orders are subtly adapted to give a more positive view of the Franciscans. Others are focussed on internal discussions from within the Franciscan order. Incidentally, their focus on Franciscan matters makes it possible to distinguish between the two translators. As has been shown by Marie Holban, Thenaud was an adherent of the Conventual Franciscans, whereas the anonymous translator seems to have been a Franciscan of the Regular Observance, judging from his dislike for the 'larges manches', characteristic of the habits of the Conventuals.²⁴ In Thenaud's case, Folly's discourse ends with a praise of Saint Francis:

Je diz davantage, que toute la religion chrestienne n'est fors une de mes escolles, en laquelle sont myeulx aprins et plus estimez les simples gens, femmes assoties, gens transportez ou presque privez de l'entendement, comme appert ou fondateur de l'ordre minoricq (après lequel couraient les

²³ Rechtien J.G., "A 1520 French Translation of the *Moriae Encomium*", *Renaissance Quarterly* 27, 4 (1974) 23–35. This translation is generally ascribed to Georges Haloin or d'Halluin, but see Mattheussen C., "La traduction française de *L'Éloge de la folie* par Georges d'Halluin et la traduction anonyme parisienne de 1520", *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 28 (1979) 187–198.

²⁴ Holban M., "Un témoignage inconnu sur le rayonnement érasmien dans l'entourage immédiat de François Ier", in *Nouvelles Études d'Histoire, présentées au X^e Congrès des Sciences Historiques, Rome 1955* (Bucarest: 1955) (265–284) 269.

enfants de la cité d'Asize avecques pierres et terre au commencement de sa conversion, comme après ung foul.²⁵

Which edition of Erasmus did Thenaud use? According to his modern editors,²⁶ Thenaud used one of the first Parisian editions of Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* (A1–A2) or one of its imitations (A3–A7 and B) (1511–1515) and not the Schürer edition (C) of 1514 with its important additions, nor the famous Froben edition (D) from Basel, 1515, with the commentary by Listrius. Indeed, Thenaud never includes any of the additions and commentaries of the latter two editions. There is however one exception, which seems to point to an isolated consultation of the Listrius commentary. In the 1517 and 1518 manuscripts of his *Triumphe*, Thenaud quotes a sentence from Persius without translating it: '[...] comme dit le satire: *Scire tuum nichil est nisi te scire hoc sciat alter, at pulchrum est digito monstrari et dicier hic est*' (underlining mine).²⁷ The second part of this quotation '*at pulchrum est digito monstrari et dicier hic est*' is only found in Listrius's commentary. It could have inspired Thenaud with the idea of giving the complete quotation (which is not in Listrius or in Erasmus). Additional evidence is provided by the orthography of the underlined verb *dicier*, which coincides with the orthography of the word used by Listrius. In the 1523 manuscript, Thenaud or his scribe corrected this orthography in the more usual form '*dicir*'.

This passage is also interesting on account of another addition to Erasmus's text which has been inserted immediately after the Persius quotation:

Ceulx cy veulent estre preferez a Homere, Virgile, Varro et Tite-Live, contre lesquels font invectives. Lesquels deveroient trouver ung tel prince que Ptolomee pour leur bailer les responce qu'il donna a celluy fat et sot qui avoit compose ung livre reprehensif d'Homere, duquel luy en demandoit sallaire. Car il luy dist: 'Tu es plus riche que moy, d'autant qu'es plus grant que Homere qui tout mort et defunct nourrit tant d'entendemens et espritz, ausquels mes tresors ne scauroient satisfaire.'²⁸

This anecdote, which is not mentioned in Listrius's commentary, comes from the preface to Book VII of Vitruvius's *De architectura*, but I have not

²⁵ Thenaud, *Triumphe de Prudence* 248.

²⁶ Schuurs-Janssen. – Stuij, "Introduction" (1997) CVII–CX. The entry letters and numbers referring to the Latin of Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* coincide with the ones given by the ASD-edition IV-3, 1979.

²⁷ Thenaud, *Triumphe de Prudence* 234–235.

²⁸ Thenaud, *Triumphe de Prudence* 235.

discovered how Thenaud found this very applicable, but isolated quotation of Vitruvius – it is in fact the only trace of Vitruvius in the entire book.

Thenaud's adaptation shows some other notable deviations from the Erasmian source text. Generally speaking, Thenaud tends to not always translate literally; he often makes drastic selections by omitting whole passages and/or summarising the essence of the original text. This tendency becomes more pronounced as the book progresses, and it is visible not only on the macro level of the episode, but also on the micro level of the sentence. For instance, when comparing the following sentence with the Latin original: 'brief sans moy n'est entretenue amitié ne conjunction entre le mary et la femme, seigneur et varlet, compagnon et frere' (208), one notes that Thenaud has omitted the very first couple mentioned by Folly, namely the King and his subjects. With the young king in mind as a reader, it would indeed have been unwise to qualify the relationship between the ruler and his subjects as folly.

However, Thenaud also shares another tendency with most translators of his time, which is to expand the text, to explain (for instance, all the Greek names of Stultitia's company are gallicized), or translate ('Aussi l'apostre s'attribue cestuy tiltre, quant dit: *Insipiens quis est plus ego?* C'est a dire 's'il y a aucun fol et ignorant je le suys plus'). Often Thenaud seizes the opportunity to show off his erudition, thus adding to Erasmus's text: 'comme Zoroastes', 'plus haulte que celle d'Appolo ou de Dyane', 'les Cipriotes', 'Theobretus, les Chatons', 'comme Achilles ou Hannibal', 'par Chaton', or including, as in the above mentioned quotation of Persius, an untranslated Latin phrase: 'in camera caritatis'.²⁹ There are also additional references to the allegorical framework of the book. These references are frequently repeated towards the end of the translation: 'les jardins de Sophie et Science', 'jardin de Sophie', 'le mont de Sophie', 'jardin de Sophie', 'la vraye fontaine de Sophie'.³⁰ Some of these additions refer to the specific French context, as is demonstrated in the following quotation in which I have italicized Thenaud's additions: 'comme appert premier en l'Irlandoy qui ne vouldroit estre Lombard, ny *le Breton ou Angloys François*'.³¹ One of this last category of additions is reminiscent of Rabelais's later writings, notably the following reference to the French royal court: 'Aussi a Madame de Rambouillet', which is immediately

²⁹ Respectively Thenaud, *Triumphe de Prudence* 247, 200, 200, 204, 215, 225, 246, 241.

³⁰ Respectively Thenaud, *Triumphe de Prudence* 234, 235, 236, 236, 237.

³¹ Thenaud, *Triumphe de Prudence* 208.

preceded by an interesting allusion to the French court jester Triboulet, who would play a very important role in Rabelais's books. The marginal note reads: 'Par l'experience de Triboulet il prouve que les folz ont plus de felicité en cestuy monde que les saiges'.³²

The manner in which some of Folly's enumerations have been expanded is also typically Rabelaisian, especially at the beginning of the translation. In this way, Erasmus's logical enumeration 'Busirides, Phalarides, febres quartanas, muscas, calvitia, atque id genus pestes [...]'³³ becomes, under Thenaud's pen: 'non seulement aux dieux et *deesses*, *mais aux pusses*, *mouches*, *avettes*, *aux tyrantz*, prinses, roys et *empereurs*, *et aux autres basses choses* [...]'.³⁴ The italicised words indicate the numerous contradictory, even nonsensical transitions, which are absent in Erasmus: from 'deesses' to 'puces', from 'avettes' ('bees') to 'tirans', and from 'empereurs' to 'autres basses choses'. The same comic incoherence occurs in the following enumeration: 'batailles, paix, empires, conseilz, jugemens' – until this point this is the correct translation of Erasmus, but then follows an unexpected, illogical rupture, which is not found in the original: 'pestilences, vies, famines' – followed by a return to the Erasmian text: 'ubertez, mariages, divorces, amours, ennemytiez, loix, sciences et fortunes'.³⁵ Thenaud's intention with these insertions is likely to give a comic absurdity to Folly's discourse on a linguistic level – something which is absent in Erasmus, as well as in the other texts by Thenaud, but which announces the absurd enumerations Rabelais would compose fifteen years later. In one such example: 'un gros, gras, grand, gris, joly, petit, moisy livret',³⁶ the rhyming and assonating words 'gros' and 'grand' semantically exclude the qualification 'petit', and the negative words 'gras', 'gris' and 'moisy' exclude the positive qualification 'joly'.

In other passages Thenaud shows the fondness for theatre that he shares with the Nazaire-figure – real theatre, but also theatre as a metaphor. Erasmus's Folly often uses the traditional metaphor of life as a stage. Not only did Thenaud select and translate these instances eagerly, he sometimes theatricalized passages that in Erasmus's text do not contain any reference to theatre. The following sentence, for instance, misinterprets Erasmus, who does not refer to a farce, staged by fools in Rome, but rather

³² Ibidem, 220.

³³ ASD IV-3 74, l. 48–49.

³⁴ Thenaud, *Triumphe de Prudence* 199 (italics mine).

³⁵ Ibidem, 199–200.

³⁶ Rabelais François, *Œuvres complètes*, eds. M. Huchon – F. Moreau (Paris: 1994) 10.

to the public reading of the well-known Aesopian fable of 'The Belly and the Members', an anecdote related by Livy:

Plus proffita la farce, jouee a Romme par les folz des [membres] qui se complaignoient du ventre qui tout devoiroit, que toutes les predications, collations ou harangues des orateurs et sages.³⁷

In the next quotation Thenaud seems to mix up Erasmus's metaphor of life as a stage and the theatrical illusion of the stage, which Erasmus keeps well distinguished, one from the other. This is, in English translation, Erasmus's text:

Now, what else is the whole life of man but a sort of play. [...] At this point let us suppose some wise man dropped from heaven confronts me and insists that the man whom all look up to as a god and master is not even human, as he is ruled by his passions, like an animal and is no more than the lowest slave for serving of his own accord. Or again, he might tell someone else who is mourning his father to laugh because the dead man is only just beginning to live, seeing that this life of ours is nothing but a sort of death. Another man who boasts of his ancestry he might call low-born and bastard because he is far removed from virtue, which is the sole source of nobility. If he had the same sort of thing to say about everyone else, what would happen? We should think him a crazy madman. Nothing is so foolish as mistimed wisdom, and nothing less sensible than misplaced sense.³⁸

In Thenaud's version, the first sentence exposes the theatrical metaphor, which in the second sentence slowly transforms into the 'reality' of the theatre ('[l]es choses presentes de la farce'), and its illusion, based on what Coleridge once called 'the willing suspension of disbelief'. That is to say that Erasmus's pope and mourning son are real, whereas for Thenaud they are roles played by actors on a stage:

Ainsi a ce propos la vie des homes n'est fors une farce en laquelle l'un entre pour jouer le pape, l'autre le cardinal, l'autre le foul, l'autre la dame, l'autre a le rolle de l'hermite. Et s'il descendoit du ciel quelque sage, et il dist des joueurs: 'Celluy que voys pape est ung home marié, celluy qui pleure son pere l'a encores en vie, cil qui joue la femme est ung filz, et cecy que voyez n'est que mensonge', seroit il pas repute fol pource qu'il ne pourroit appliquer ou prester son entendement es choses presentes de la farce et dissimuler comme les autres?³⁹

³⁷ Thenaud, *Triumphe de Prudence* 210.

³⁸ Erasmus, *Praise of Folly. Moriae encomium*, in Radice B. (ed. and transl.), Erasmus, *Collected Works*, 27 vols. (Toronto-Buffalo-London: 1986) 103.

³⁹ Thenaud, *Triumphe de Prudence* 213.

This quotation is also a good example of the two contrary tendencies in Thenaud's way of translating: selection and resuming on the one hand, amplification and overdetermination on the other. And because his intended reader, the young king, is proud of his ancestry, Thenaud chooses not to translate Folly's example of a man boasting of his forefathers.

I would like to finish my reflections on the *Triumphe de Prudence* with a passage that brings these many elements together: Thenaud's selective, summarizing and at the same time amplifying way of translating Erasmus, his taste for theatrical metaphors (the corresponding marginal note says: 'Ce monde n'est fors ung theatre de folie',⁴⁰ and interest in the work of Lucian, in which he is very close to Rabelais. In this passage, Thenaud first selected a description from Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* that describes how the gods are looking down on humanity from above as if watching a play on a stage:

[...] sur le hault du jour, comme en passant le temps regardant cza bas ou monde qui leur est ung theatre de folies, desquelles ils rient et prennent leurs esbatz [...].⁴¹

Then the follies of the players are described in a long drawn-out enumeration of Rabelaisian proportions, articulated by repeated indefinite pronouns in anaphoric positions: 'L'un [...]' (1x), 'L'autre [...]' (9x), 'Tel [...]' (2x), 'Autres [...]' (5x). This passage, that rather literally translates the corresponding enumeration of the Erasmian source text, is then linked to another passage, taken from a few pages further in Erasmus, in which he refers to Lucian's *Icaromenippus*, which he had recently translated into Latin with his friend Thomas More. In Thenaud's translation this passage also underwent a certain theatricalization, motivated solely by Erasmus's use of the word 'tragoedia':

Et brief, si esties la sus ou ciel de la Lune, comme fut jadiz Menippus, et que peussiez veoir l'estat des humains comme moy, et comme font les dieux et deesses, vous diriez que les hommes sont ça bas comme mouches, escharbotz, froumiz ou avettes, qui ne font fors rire, pleurer, naistre, mourir, monter, descendre, batailler, s'accordre, vibre et tuer, si que ne vistes ne leustes oncques si belles tragedies et esbatemens que font les humains es celestes (232).⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibidem 232.

⁴¹ Ibidem 232.

⁴² Ibidem 232.

One notes how Thénaut expands Erasmus's words 'muscarum aut culicum' into 'mouches, escharbotz, froumiz ou avettes', and how he reordered Erasmus's enumeration⁴³ in a rationalized way, presenting everything in binomial pairs: 'rire' versus 'pleurer', 'naistre' versus 'mourir', etc. Rabelais's presence also continues to be felt here, albeit indirectly; his interest in Lucian's *Icaromenippus*, as a reader and perhaps as a translator, and his possible involvement as an expert on Lucian in Thénaut's later work will be addressed at the end of this article.

Erasmus in Thénaut's Other Triumphes

Whereas the young Rabelais seems to be absent from the three other *Triumphes*, Erasmus continues to be present, though in a much more serious form. As such he had competition in the form of another humanist authority, Petrarch, whose Latin and Italian works were largely available in the King's library. Schuurs-Janssen and Stuij have succeeded in identifying the main Petrarchan source texts in Thénaut's *Triumphes*, and not surprisingly his *Trionfi* are mentioned in the *Triumphe de Prudence*, in a personification pronounced by the muse Clio: 'Je suys fille de Memoire, mere de Fame et Renommee, a laquelle Petrarche donne triumphe sur la mort'.⁴⁴ But the main Petrarchan source in the *Triumphe de Prudence* is the *Rerum memorandarum libri*, of which the chapters "De memoria", "De solertia et calliditate", "De sompniis", and "De providentia et coniecturis" are systematically used to provide long series of *exempla* – more than fifty-five *exempla* in total. Thénaut's second *Triumphe*, his *Triumphe de la Force*, contains, in addition to two brief references to Petrarch's *Trionfi*, a lengthy borrowing at the opening of the book: the author's long lament on fortune's vicissitudes is inspired by Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortune*.⁴⁵ Although Petrarch's direct influence diminishes in Thénaut's

⁴³ For comparison, the Erasmian text reads: 'In summa si mortalium innumerabiles tumultus e luna quemadmodum Menippus olim, despicias, putes te muscarum aut culicum videre turbam inter se rixantium, bellantium, insidiantium, rapiantium, ludentium, lasciuientium, nascentium, cadentium, morientium. Neque satis credi potest, quos motus, quas tragoedias ciat tantulum animalculum tamque mox peritulum' (ASD IV-3 138, l. 231–236).

⁴⁴ Thénaut, *Triumphe de Prudence* 66.

⁴⁵ For more details, see Schuurs-Janssen. – Stuij, "Introduction" (2002) XLVII–L.

two other *Triumphes*, all of this indicates the general humanist context in which Thenaud's works took shape.⁴⁶

Unlike Petrarch, Erasmus's presence in the *Triumphes* remains throughout, thus underlining Thenaud's intellectual modernism. In the second part of the cycle, the *Triumphe de Force*, Erasmus is present through his *Enchiridion militis christiani* (1503), although he is never mentioned by name. The struggle of the personified Force to defend seven besieged allegorical cities – Labeur, Honneur, Magnificence, Magnanimité, Patience, Victoire and Persévérance – against their enemies seems to be moulded upon the struggle of the Erasmian Christian Soldier, who must defeat seven peoples, symbolizing the Seven Capital Sins.⁴⁷

Contrary to the first two *Triumphes*, the third and fourth ones, the *Triumphe de Justice* and the *Triumphe de Temperance*, have come down to us in only one manuscript, which Schuurs-Janssen and Stuij date to the spring of 1519. In the third *Triumphe*, Erasmus's influence is felt in two ways, the first of which is in a direct manner through his *Institutio principis Christiani*, which had only recently been published in 1516. This treatise is copiously quoted by Thenaud, again without any reference to its author. Secondly, Erasmus is also indirectly present in this *Triumphe* as the translator of a text by Plutarch, known under its Latin title *De adulatore*, which Erasmus published with his *Institutio*. Working from Erasmus's Latin translation, Thenaud gives a partial translation of the same book. And here, Thenaud's intellectual topicality becomes clear once again, for his translation was done in the same year as the first printed translation of the text, the one published by François Sauvaige in 1519.⁴⁸

Very up-to-date also describes Erasmus's presence in the fourth and final part of the series, the *Triumphe de Temperance*. The Erasmian source text, the *Querela pacis*, was clearly shaped by the politics of the time.⁴⁹ Written in the context of the League of Cambrai in March 1517 and published in December 1517, it was an immediate success, including at the royal court: King Francis I had a copy of a 1518 edition of this book, bound

⁴⁶ For some general perspectives on petrarchism in the Royal Court, see, among others, Lecoq A.-M., *François I^{er} imaginaire. Symbolique et politique à l'aube de la Renaissance française* (Paris: 1987) 27–34.

⁴⁷ This interpretation was proposed by Lecoq, *François I^{er} imaginaire* 287–301, and followed by Schuurs-Janssen. – Stuij, "Introduction" (2002).

⁴⁸ See Schuurs-Janssen. – Stuij, "Introduction" (2007).

⁴⁹ The present paragraph is largely based upon Schuurs-Janssen. – Stuij, "Introduction" (2010).

with the King's Arms. However, at the beginning of 1519, the international political situation changed rapidly and drastically with the death of Emperor Maximilian and the ensuing struggle for the imperial succession between the French and Spanish kings. The political situation obliged Thénau to leave out all of the direct political references of Erasmus's treatise. Thénau limited himself to a very free and abridged imitation of the *Querela pacis*, of which the main modification was the replacement of Erasmus's *Pax* by the allegorical Truth ('Verité'). According to Schuur-Janssen and Stuij, Thénau used the same allegorical procédé a second time, in the long prosopopeia ascribed to *Pauvreté*, but there Erasmus's direct influence is less visible.

Erasmus may also be present in the last *Triumphe* in an indirect way, one overlooked by the modern editors. Although they are right to insist on the great number of references to, and quotations (more than twenty!) from, St. Jerome, most of them from his letters, they do not mention the Erasmian context of these letters. In fact, in 1516 Erasmus published St. Jerome's works in a beautiful folio edition of nine volumes, of which the first four contain his letters.

Despite Erasmus's presence in Thénau's *Triumphes*, this series contains several other elements which are far from Erasmian, including its restriction to the medium of the manuscript, its long-winded allegorical character, its pedagogical purpose as a *Mirror of princes*, its political implication in the French royal court, its Franciscan sympathies, its rather old-fashioned, encyclopaedic pretensions, and its choice of some other main sources, not mentioned until now. For example, the sole *Triumphe de Temperance* contains more than 20 quotations from the *Legenda aurea*. And neither the echoes of Dante nor of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* are in keeping with Erasmus's taste.

Thénau's dissemblance with Erasmus is especially noticeable when considering the other manuscripts that the former wrote for the royal family. These works have less to do with Erasmus's intellectual preoccupations than King Francis's curiosity for astrology, cabbalism and royal genealogy, as can be judged from their titles: *La Lignée de Saturne* (ca. 1509), *La sainte et treschrestienne Cabale metrifiee* (1519), *Traité de la Cabale en prose* (1520–1521), *Genealogie de la tressacree majestee du Roy treschrestien* (1533). There is however one important exception which shows some Erasmian influence, although its long title does little to suggest this. *Trois resolutions et sentences, cestassauoir de lastrologue, du poete, et du theologue, sur les grandes coniunctions, moyennes et petites qui se font au signe de pisces. Lan mil.v^{cc}.xxiii^e* was written in 1520, and it is in this work we meet Rabelais again.

Thenaud, Erasmus, Rabelais and Lucian

The text in question is an anonymous manuscript, now held by the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna.⁵⁰ In an article by Anne-Marie Lecoq,⁵¹ this manuscript has been convincingly ascribed to Jean Thenaud. In this text Thenaud positions himself against some contemporary prognostications which predicted a devastating deluge for the year 1524, marked by the great conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the sign of Pisces. Thenaud once again introduces the Pilgrim from the *Triumphes* as the narrator, who does not fall asleep this time, but is rudely awoken from a 'delicieuse contemplation' by a doom-mongering astrologer, who predicts enormous floods for the year 1524. The Pilgrim does not agree with the astrologer, and after a dialogue, decides to consult three different authorities on this question. The first one is another astrologer, who does not believe in his colleague's predictions. The second one is an experienced space-traveller named Icaromenippus, 'qui selon les fables antiques avoit vollé es cieulx'.⁵² Icaromenippus narrates two travel-stories: the first of which relates his extraordinary voyages on earth – this is a partial⁵³ adaptation of Lucian's *A True History* –, whereas the second relates his voyages in space, and is a shortened version of Lucian's *Icaromenippus*. It is noteworthy that the first travel-story, the longer of the two, is not in fact necessary for Thenaud's argument, as it does not address the topic of astrology. This is stressed by the Pilgrim only after the story has been told:

Maistre icaromenip Je suys venu vers vous non mye pour scavoir votre peregrination terrestre ny navigation maritime mais pour scavoir votre voyage celeste.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ *Troys resolutions et sentences / cestassavoir de lastrologue / du poete / et du theologue / sur les grandes coniuñctions / moyennes et petites qui se font ou signe de pisces. Lan mil.V.^{cc} xxiiii^e*. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2645.

⁵¹ Lecoq A.-M., "La grande conjunction de 1524 démythifiée pour Louise de Savoie. Un manuscrit de Jean Thénau à la Bibliothèque Nationale de Vienne", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 43 (1981) 39–60.

⁵² *Troys resolutions* fol. iv.

⁵³ The most notable difference with his source text, is that Thenaud left out the whole episode of the interstellar journey – an omission that is logical because of the other text by Lucian that Thenaud inserted in his *Troys resolutions*.

⁵⁴ *Troys resolutions* fol. 32rb. At this point in his text Thenaud finds it necessary to repeat and summarise his argument – not without humour : 'Car ces astrologues qui nont meilleurs yeulx que nous ny lesprit plus agu, nous menassent pour la coniunction de Saturne de Jupiter et des autres planettes comme silz les avoyent en leurs manches et [encore?] quil[z] ne scavent rien dire combien il ya d'Athenes a Megare ou de lyon a digeon touteffois ilz enseignent a mesurer les [estoiles] a congnoistre leurs magnitudes distances et vertuz comme silz avoyent esté nourriz en icelles. Ils font sp[h]erez triangles

One is left with the impression that Lucian's *A True History* is retold simply for the literary fun of it.

The third and final authority is St. Paul, who is consulted because 'par attestation de la verité theologale [il] avoit esté ravy en cieulx'.⁵⁵ His conclusion is decisive: God, not the stars, determines man's fate and God's ways are higher than ours.

For the contemporary reader, the sole presence of the two works by Lucian in *Troys resolutions et sentences* (of which one was not even justified on purely argumentative grounds) sufficed to qualify Thénaut's work as Erasmian given that the names of Erasmus and Lucian were firmly linked in the mind of every reader. More specifically, connecting Lucian and St. Paul inevitably reminded readers of the *Praise of Folly*, which brought together Lucianic satire (with several explicit references to Lucian) and Pauline wisdom. But *La grande conjonction de 1524* also has an unmistakably Rabelaisian flavour. As Mireille Huchon noted, using Lucian to combat false pronostications heralds Rabelais: 'Les deux premières ouvrages de Rabelais, *Pantagruel* et la *Pantagrueline prognostication* [...] entretiennent des rapports étroits avec l'*Histoire véritable* de Lucien et avec les débats sur les pronostications à propos de la grande conjonction de 1524'.⁵⁶ On the micro level of style and vocabulary this Rabelaisian tone already intrigued Anne-Marie Lecoq, who cautiously noted: 'ce petit épisode a peut-être une place dans l'histoire, encore obscure, de la genèse d'un chef-d'oeuvre'.⁵⁷ It is on this question, that I would like to formulate some further hypotheses in the following paragraphs, before returning to Erasmus in my concluding remarks.

The manner in which Thénaut translated the above mentioned works by Lucian closely resembles his adaptive translation of *The Praise of Folly*, as he once again uses the contrary processes of selection and amplification.⁵⁸ In order to systematically evaluate a possible Rabelaisian presence, I looked for the major changes Thénaut applied to the Lucianic source

quadratures astrolabes quilz disent et prouvent estre chose seures et infalibles. Et qui pis est ilz nous menassent tant de lan mil cinq cens xxiiii quil semble que chascun vivant doit commencer des cestuy jour a faire son testament comme acertaine de perir en icelle annee' (*Troys resolutions* fol. 32rb-33ra).

⁵⁵ *Troys resolutions* fol. 1v.

⁵⁶ Huchon, *Rabelais* 103.

⁵⁷ Lecoq, "La grande conjonction de 1524" 53.

⁵⁸ A more precise study will be necessary to confirm my supposition that Thénaut did not translate directly from the Greek, but made use of the Latin translations by Poggio (for *A True History*) and Erasmus/More (for *Icaromenippus*).

texts, and in which there are striking resemblances with Rabelais's works. The major 'Rabelaisian' change, already commented upon by Anne-Marie Lecoq, occurs at the beginning of Thenaud's translation of *A True History*. Lucian's narrator relates how he and his fellow travellers found the footprints of Bacchus and Hercules together with an inscription:

[...] we saw a slab of bronze, inscribed with Greek letters, faint and obliterated, which said: "To this point came Hercules and Dionysus." There were also two footprints in the rock close by, one of which was a hundred feet long, the other less – to my thinking, the smaller one was left by Dionysus, the other by Hercules.⁵⁹

Thenaud changed this passage as follows:

[nous trouvasmes] ung arc triumphal on quel estoit escript le nom du goyant Gargalasua qui iadis avoit eu cinquante boutons en son propoint en chascun desquelz estoient cinquante charettes de foin. Nous leusmes la maintes choses de ses glorieux actes que nouse te raconter car tu cuideroys que ce fust fable ou mensonge.⁶⁰

This adaptation has of course nothing to do with Greek mythology; instead it announces Rabelais's giant Gargantua, whose name orthographically resembles Gargalasua's, both of whom have their roots in French folklore.⁶¹ Also, the way in which the narrator alludes to the inscription with Gargalasua's 'glorieux actes' makes one think of the excavation and subsequent reading of Pantagruel's 'gestes horrificques', narrated at the opening of *Gargantua*.⁶² The difference with Thenaud's Icaromenippus, who, supposedly afraid of being called a liar, abstains from recounting Gargalasua's heroic deeds, is that Rabelais's Alcofrybas would later develop this basic theme for his Gargantuan and Pantagruelian tall tales, essentially with repeated ironic statements of veracity (of the type: 'Je me donne à Dieu, si j'en mens d'un seul mot').⁶³

The beginning of Thenaud's version of *A True History* presents some additional information that is absent from Lucian, but present in

⁵⁹ Lucian, "A True History", in Lucian, *Works*, ed and transl. A.M. Harmon (Cambridge, Mass.-London: 1961), vol. I, (247–357) 255.

⁶⁰ *Trois resolutions* fol. 16rb.

⁶¹ Gargalasua's fifty buttons containing fifty haycarts each, seem to point to comic French-bred agrarian folklore. For the extremely rich folkloric and intellectual background of the Rabelaisian giants, see Gaignebet C., *À plus haut sens. L'ésotérisme spirituel et charnel de Rabelais* (Paris: 1986) and Stephens W., *Giants in Those Days. Folklore, Ancient History and Nationalism* (Lincoln-London: 1989).

⁶² Rabelais, *Œuvres* 10.

⁶³ *Ibidem* 605.

Rabelaisian fiction. Thenaud's Icaromenippus relates his former voyages as follows:

Je voyagay par tout le monde cestasscavoir en Inde pour veoir les bragmanes, En egipte pour ouyr les prestres, en perse a cause des mages, en ethiopie pour escouter les gymnosophistes.⁶⁴

These details, which do not figure in Lucian's text, correspond, syntactically and sometimes verbatim, to Rabelais's description of the voyages of Apollonius of Tyana:

Apolonius Tyaneus, qui [...] passa les Scytes, les Massagettes, les Indiens, naviga le grand fleuve Physon, jusques es Brachmanes pour veoir Hiarchas. Et [...] jusques en Ethiopie, pour veoir les Gymnosophistes.⁶⁵

One page further Thenaud's Icaromenippus gives an exhaustive list of authorities, who are not mentioned by Lucian:

[...] aussi ont escript de ces merveilles Ctesias, Ulysses, Mandeville, Philostrate, Vespuce, Loys Patrice romain [= Ludovico de Varthema] et aultre plusieurs a la verite tout ainsi que moy.⁶⁶

This list presents a comic mixture of ancient and modern authorities, both historical and fictitious – in a way that would become quite typical for Rabelais. In Rabelais's *Fifth Book* for instance, we find several lists like this, in particular the one in his chapter on *Ouy-Dire* (Hearsay), where the names of the notorious liars Philostrates and Ludovico de Varthema are given alongside the name of Jean Thenaud himself – 'si Thenaud dist vray', Rabelais mockingly observes elsewhere.⁶⁷

The comical precision in his rendering of large numbers is also Rabelaisian: whereas Lucian speaks of 170 victims, Thenaud transforms this number into 'deux mil six cens vingt et deux',⁶⁸ which announces the even more absurd numerical wordplays of Rabelais. Thus, Pantagruel manages to assemble 'dixhuyct cens cinquante et six mille, et onze sans les femmes et petitiz enfans', whereas Gargantua drowns immense numbers of Parisians with his flood of urine, specifically: 'deux cens soixante

⁶⁴ *Trois resolutions* fol. 14rb.

⁶⁵ Rabelais, *Œuvres* 282.

⁶⁶ *Trois resolutions* fol. 15ra.

⁶⁷ Rabelais, *Œuvres* 804, 1662 (variant). For other examples of incongruent lists of authorities or canonical *exempla*, see for instance, idem, *Œuvres* 22, 214, 283–284.

⁶⁸ *Trois resolutions* fol. 20rb.

mille, quatre cens dix et huyt. Sans les femmes et petiz enfans'.⁶⁹ And the incredible number of Panurge's sheep is even impossible in its comic precision: 'de .2435768. à .2435769.' and his annual revenues come up to '.6789106789. Royaulx en deniers certains'.⁷⁰

The following quotation comes from Lucian's brief account of how his travellers are trapped in polar ice:

For some days we sailed with a moderate breeze, and then a strong norther blew up and brought on great cold. The entire sea was frozen by it, not just on the surface but to depth of fully six fathoms, so that we could leave the boat and run on ice.⁷¹

Thenaud expands this passage with some geographical information:

[...] et nous droissames voile qui nous poussa en la mer glaciale qui est tout droict sous le pol artic ou tout lan ne leur est que ung iour qui dure six moys et une nuyct qui dure autant. Et par ce que c'estoit le premier jour de novembre et que les vents de bize et de gallerne avoient gelé tout la mer iusques au fond [...].⁷²

This additional information coincides with Rabelais's interest in the Nordic regions, and when Pantagruel's great circumnavigation of the world, related in the *Fourth Book*, passes through the Northern sea-routes – the big difference with Lucian and Thenaud's texts is that Pantagruel and his companions are *not* trapped in the polar ice, as Rabelais's narrator specifies explicitly.⁷³

Thenaud's versions of Lucian are also replete with references to local French geography, with a clear preference for Poitou, something which is once again typical of Rabelais's geographical humour. As an example of this tendency, Anne-Marie Lecoq quotes a long sentence that evidently lacks an equivalent in the Lucian source text:

Il tombera cent mil charges de nege es alpes de Boulogne et six foys autant en Auvergne et au mont seniz Il fera beau temps en Poytou pour les serizes de Chasteleraudoys et pour les rabes de lymousin.

However, writing in 1981, Lecoq did not dispose of a reliable concordance of Rabelais's works, and thus did not notice that not only the better known

⁶⁹ Rabelais, *Œuvres* 49, 328.

⁷⁰ Ibidem 357.

⁷¹ Lucian, "A True History" 305.

⁷² *Trois resolutions* fol. 23a-b.

⁷³ Rabelais, *Œuvres* 538: 'de paour d'entrer et estre retenuz en la mer Glacial'.

locations (Auvergne, Poitou), but also the lesser known ones – the ‘mont seniz’ and Chasteleraudoys – and even a regional speciality, ‘les rabes de lymousin’, are mentioned in Rabelais, albeit in different places, as can be learned from the concordance prepared by Dixon and Dawson.⁷⁴

In another example, it seems that Thenaud’s adaptation forms an intermediate step between Lucian and Rabelais with regards to one of their most famous episodes: the marvellous stay of Lucian’s travellers inside a huge whale and the equally marvellous voyage that Rabelais’s narrator Alcofrybas Nasier makes in the mouth of the character Pantagruel. Lucian briefly relates how the travellers, to their great surprise, met a farmer and his son, busy cultivating their garden:

Advancing eagerly, we came upon an old man and a boy very busily at work in a garden which they were irrigating with water from the spring.⁷⁵

In his adaptation Thenaud gives more precise information about the garden: ‘ung petit iardrin plain de ougnions chous et poivre’.⁷⁶ Rabelais seems to pick out one detail, namely the cabbage, and elaborates on it in a dryly comic passage:

Le premier que y trouvay, ce fut un bon homme qui plantoit des choulx. Dont tout esbahy luy demanday. ‘Mon amy, que fais tu icy?’
– Je plante (dist il) des choulx.⁷⁷

One final example – this time a stylistic one: in his version of the *Icaromenippus*, Thenaud transforms Erasmus and More’s Latin prose into a poetic prose, of which the rhyming and assonating character is evidenced by the page’s layout:

[...] Je vy
aulcuns pleurer, les aultres rire,
aulcuns naistre, les aultres mourir,
aulcuns bastir, les aultres destruire,
aulcuns en paix, aultres en guerre.⁷⁸

This closely resembles the poetic moments of Rabelais’s prose, for instance:

⁷⁴ Dixon J.E.G. – Dawson J.L., *Concordance des Oeuvres de François Rabelais* (Geneva: 1992).

⁷⁵ Lucian, “*A True History*” 289.

⁷⁶ *Troys resolutions* fol. 19a.

⁷⁷ Rabelais, *Oeuvres* 331.

⁷⁸ *Troys resolutions* fol. 36a.

– Sont elles (demandoit frere Jan) masles ou femelles? anges ou mortelles? femmes ou pucelles?

– Elles sont, respondit Xenomanes, femelles en sexe, mortelles en condition: aulcunes pucelles, aultres non.⁷⁹

How can all of these pre-Rabelaisian elements in Thenaud's text be explained? The similarities are too numerous to attribute them to mere coincidence (they are in fact absent in the last three *Triumphes*), or to a general spirit of the time. It is also unlikely that Rabelais would have had access to Thenaud's manuscript, which was written for the private use of Louise de Savoy. And even if he did have access to it, or to a copy of it, Thenaud's text is of too little weight to have influenced the Rabelaisian novels in such a diverse and profound manner. It therefore seems more plausible that Rabelais, in one way or another, contributed to the creation of the manuscript, and by doing so, left his mark. Rabelais, who, as we have seen, was already known as a expert on Lucian in the 1520s, would have been able to assist Thenaud, not so much by furnishing a Latin translation of Lucian's Greek texts (which had already been done by Poggio, Erasmus and More), but rather by giving him a draft version of a French translation or adaptation (which may have been the text that Pierre de Lille was referring to).

In fact, working with drafts seems to be a characteristic of Rabelaisian writing. Rabelais often first translated or adapted a text he found interesting, and which had not yet been translated into French. Then, later (sometimes years later), he used this draft for his comic novels. In this respect Rabelais's posthumous *Fifth Book* is very interesting, as it was put together by an unknown editor who simply collected and arranged the *brouillons* found after Rabelais's death, to make a new book out of them.⁸⁰ Among these drafts, the editor found translations of Pliny, of Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* and also a comic adaptation of Lucian's *Dionysus* – probably adapted directly from the Greek –, all drafts that found their place, without many changes, in Rabelais's *Fifth Book*.

⁷⁹ Rabelais, *Œuvres* 607.

⁸⁰ For a synthetic overview of the construction of the *Fifth Book*, see Huchon M., "Fifth Book (Cinquesme Livre)", in Zegura E.C. (ed.), *The Rabelais Encyclopedia* (Westport, Connecticut-London: 2004) 76–78.

Conclusion

In summary we can say that Thénault managed to ensure the topicality of his work for the royal family by playing on the success of the most talked about author of his time, namely Erasmus. This actuality comes to the fore if we lay Thénault's adaptations of Erasmus next to the printed French translations, all of which are of later date. This is particularly true for his adaptation of the *Praise of Folly*, which was finished three years earlier than the first printed translation in French. Thénault's Erasmianism, however, has its limits: as we have seen, Thénault, on account of his Franciscan background, and because of the didactic nature of his work, was refractory to the ironic versatility of the *Praise of Folly*. On the other hand, he regularly lent this masterpiece a new tone in a way that is strongly reminiscent of the work of Rabelais, the best known follower of Erasmus in French literature. An explanation for this is that circa 1517 Rabelais, refigured in Thénault's youthful character Nazaire, was probably in close contact with him. The older Thénault acted as a sort of mentor, while the younger Rabelais, whose work would only appear in print as of 1532, could offer Thénault his sense of humour, his knowledge of comic literature, as well as his knowledge of Greek and of Lucian's writings. While Rabelais's influence is absent from the Erasmus-adaptations in the three other *Triumphes*, it returns in a manuscript intended for Louise de Savoy, *Trois résolutions et sentences*, into which two works by Lucian, one of Erasmus's favourite authors, were inserted. Both of these texts may have been translated into French by Rabelais.

In this way the early reception of Erasmus studied here forms an important link in a long literary tradition which was amusingly summarised by Voltaire in his Lucianic dialogue entitled *Conversation de Lucien, Erasme et Rabelais dans les Champs Élysées* (1765). Lucian, Erasmus, Rabelais (and of course Voltaire himself) form a family of redoubtable mockers, but Thénault would not likely have counted himself a member of the group. However, his role in its formation was not unimportant, even if it was short-lived, indirect, and unobtrusive – the unfortunate reasons for which he has fallen into oblivion since the sixteenth century.

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ANTONIO BRUCIOLI AND THE ITALIAN RECEPTION OF ERASMUS:
THE *PRAISE OF FOLLY* IN DIALOGUE

Reinier Leushuis

Until now the Italian humanist Antonio Brucioli has received little attention by scholars familiar with Erasmus's influence and legacy. This is not surprising, given that the name of this Florentine polygraph (1487–1566), who spent the majority of his life exiled in Venice, is not mentioned by Erasmus (and thus does not figure in Bietenholz's and Deutscher's *Contemporaries of Erasmus*).¹ Neither does Brucioli particularly stand out among the myriad of characters that people the long narrative of *erasmismo* in Italy as it was established by renowned scholars such as Delio Cantimori, Pierre de Nolhac, Augustin Renaudet, and Silvana Seidel Menchi.² Meticulously mapping the historical reception and ideological reworking in Italy of the major Erasmian themes of religious renewal, humanist reform, education, and ancient and biblical philology, these scholars considered Brucioli's works of rather limited importance for their purpose. As we will see, this is in part for valid reasons: Brucioli did not play a significant role in the vicissitudes of Erasmus's legacy in historical events such as the Italian Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and the Roman Inquisition's religious censorship.

One intellectual historian paying more extensive attention to our Venetian exile, however, is Silvana Seidel Menchi, whose monumental *Erasmus in Italia 1520–1580* treats Brucioli's reworkings of Erasmian material on Christian marriage in some of his *Dialogi della morale filosofia* (1526 and 1537) and points to the undoubtedly Erasmian echoes of *philosophia*

¹ Bietenholz P. – Deutscher T. (eds.), *Contemporaries of Erasmus: a Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, 3 vols. (Toronto: 1974).

² Cantimori D., "Erasmus e la vita morale e religiosa italiana nel secolo XVI" [1936] and "Erasmus e l'Italia" [1937], in idem (ed.), *Umanesimo e religione nel Rinascimento* (Turin: 1975); Nolhac P. de, *Érasme en Italie: Étude sur un épisode de la Renaissance* (Paris: 1898); Seidel Menchi S., *Erasmus in Italia 1520–1580* (Turin: 1987); and Renaudet A., *Érasme et l'Italie* (Geneva: 1998, reprint from 1954). See also Gilmore M., "Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism", in Oberman H. – Brady T. (eds.), *Itinerarium italicum: The Profile of the Italian Renaissance in the Mirror of Its European Transformations* (Leiden: 1975) 61–115; and Grendler M.-P., "The Survival of Erasmus in Italy", *Erasmus in English* 8 (1976) 2–22.

Christi in Brucioli's dedications of his Italian Bible translations.³ Her interest lies primarily in tracing the influence of Erasmus's figure and works on the ideologies of the Italian reform and counter-reform movements. Yet Seidel Menchi's comparative analysis of writings by Erasmus and those by his Italian followers, opponents, and defenders reveals, without further exploring the issue, that in many cases, and most notably in that of Brucioli, the texts by Italian Erasmians can also contribute to an understanding of the influence of Erasmus's rhetorical and literary strategies on contemporary developments in literary form and genre in the Italian vernacular.

The case I would like to make in this study therefore concerns less intellectual or religious history but rather the literary and rhetorical aspects of textual transmission between the genres of declamation and dialogue. The following is a case-study of one specific literary adaptation of a particular *declamatio* by Erasmus, his well-known *Praise of Folly* (*Moriae encomium id est Stultitiae laus*), as it was reworked by Antonio Brucioli in a dialogical version entitled *Dialogo della sapientia et della stultitia* (1526, second edition 1538). Brucioli's 'dialogized Folly' should be seen in the context of a decade, the 1520s, that was particularly important for the development of the dialogue genre in Italy, which also coincides with the onset of the influence of Erasmus's major works in the Italian peninsula. To be sure, claiming that Brucioli's large corpus of dialogues is as innovative as the canonical humanist dialogues by best-seller authors such as Leon Battista Alberti, Pietro Bembo, Baldassar Castiglione, and Sperone Speroni would be an altogether incorrect assessment. Nevertheless Brucioli was an avid early *cinquecento* experimenter of the dialogue form and sensitive to its emerging Renaissance poetics that sought to combine the imitation of classical models of argumentation with a lifelike immanence of the spoken word. His dialogues generally seek to recreate a vivid, mimetic, and open-ended *disputatio* modeled after classical predecessors, staging a *praxis* of collective speaking by virtuous interlocutors on ancient and Christian moral wisdom, and exploiting dialogue as a practical tool for the application thereof in the reader's sphere of action. In that respect, his *Della sapientia et della stultitia*, as well as some of his other dialogues, clearly echo Erasmian dialogical and declamatory strategies that exploit the mimetic value of the spoken exchange (such as in the *Colloquies*).

³ See Seidel Menchi, *Erasmus in Italia* 88–90; 187–190. See also idem "La circolazione clandestina di Erasmo in Italia: i casi di Antonio Brucioli e di Marsilio Andreasi", *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* 9 (1979) 573–601.

In the following I will provide first of all a general comparative analysis of the two texts, mapping Brucioli's borrowings from Erasmus's *Moriae encomium* and tracing the adaptation of this material in his particular dialogue. Secondly, with this specific example of textual transmission, I intend to argue that the imitation and adaptation of Erasmus's *Moria* by Italian polygraphs such as Brucioli involved not so much the Dutch humanist's social and religious program of reform conveyed under the guise of satire, but rather the literary efficiency of Erasmus's artful dynamics of dialogue, speech, and mimetic language. Figures such as Brucioli, I believe, were intrigued by what Marc Fumaroli calls 'Folly's eloquence',⁴ i.e. her theatrical staging as a paradoxical mock orator who, in a serio-comic speech to her audience, adopts, intertwines, and transforms a multiplicity of voices, whereby the artful and ludic handling of *verba* (words and their meaning) takes precedence over *res* (the orator's argument).

Even if perhaps just as ideologically charged and religiously controversial as many other Erasmian works that made their way into Italy during the peak years of their propagation and translation on the Italian peninsula (1520–1530), such as the *Enchiridion militis christiani*, the *Institutio Principis Christiani*, and his New Testament scholarship, all of which contributed to Erasmus's controversial status in Italy as a figure of Lutheran ecclesiastical reform,⁵ his famous best-seller *Praise of Folly* also activated a multitude of textual imitations in literary and polygraph circles, where it was used more for its rhetorical value and play with paradoxical elements than for its ideological and religious message. Erasmus's witty and clever paradox of the praise of folly, with its implicit premise that much 'folly' contains deep 'wisdom' and vice-versa, was eagerly pillaged by a small army of imitators, some of whom remain anonymous, while others, at least according to some critics, should perhaps as well have remained anonymous. The *Stultitiae laus* was printed on Italian soil shortly after its 1511 publication (Venice, Aldus, August 1515; Florence, heirs of Giunti, 1518),⁶ and although it was not translated into Italian until 1539, imitations and paraphrases, either of parts, of the whole, or just of the concept of a paradoxical Folly, follow numerous: from Fausto Perisauli da

⁴ Fumaroli M., "L'éloquence de la Folie", in *Dix conférences sur Érasme. Éloge de la folie – Colloques. Actes des journées organisées par l'Université de Bâle et le Centre Culturel Suisse, à Paris les 11 et 12 avril 1986* (Paris-Geneva: 1988) 11–21.

⁵ See Gilmore, "Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism" 65–84; Seidel Menchi, *Erasmus in Italia* 41–67.

⁶ Miller C., "Introduction" to *Moriae encomium*, ASD IV-3 44; 47. See also Grendler M.-P., "The Erasmus Holdings of Roman and Vatican Libraries", *Erasmus in English* 13 (1984) 17.

Tredozio's poem *De triumpho stultitiae* (Venice, 1524), to the anonymous prose text *La Pazzia* (1541), in part a translation and in part an adaptation to an Italian social context, and Ortensio Lando's 'Meglio esser matto che savio' (It is better to be foolish than to be wise), part of his book of *Paradossi* (1543), Moria's self-praising figure clearly found resonance in Italian literary circles.⁷

What distinguishes Brucioli's text from these imitations and makes it a worthy object of study in the context of Erasmian influences in Italy is not just its early date (1526, making it one of the very first *Moria* imitations in Italy) but more importantly its dialogical form. Folly is no longer the sole 'orator' displaying her rhetorical skills in an artfully paradoxical self-*encomium*, but has to make the case for her value and supremacy against her staged opponent Wisdom. Such a disentanglement of the natures of wisdom and folly, which are in many ways interconnected in Erasmus's text, seems at first a simplifying exercise, allowing the reader to identify more easily a good-evil opposition for the purpose of making a moral choice. However, as we will see, the dialogical dynamics of Brucioli's satirical debate shift the emphasis from Moria's social and reformist ideology to its own rhetorical form as a dialogue and its artful use of the spoken disputation. Brucioli's interlocutors voice the Erasmian paradoxical complexities of an implicitly 'wise' folly by miming, in their exchange of replies, the very idea that the overarching paradox of Moria's sermon in Erasmus ('what I say is foolish, but since Folly is speaking, it is also wisdom') is ultimately an issue of how we *speak* (i.e. literally exchange *verba*) about matters (ideological standpoints, opinions, *res*) that are fundamentally all the same. Brucioli's dialogical adaptation of Erasmus's Moria reveals that praising (or, for that matter, blaming) folly (or, for that matter, wisdom) is ultimately a purely ludic oratorical exercise in disputational speaking.

Antonio Brucioli wrote most of his oeuvre while living in exile in Venice and his career is often regarded as that of the typical humanist *poligrafo*.

⁷ Croce B., "Sulle tradizioni e imitazioni italiane dell'Elogio e dei 'Colloqui' di Erasmo", in idem (ed), *Aneddoti di varia letteratura* (Bari: 1953) 411–414; Seidel Menchi, *Erasmus in Italia* 38–39; 363, no. 30 (where she lists a variety of other texts in the same vein); Grendler P., *Critics of the Italian World (1530–1560)*, Anton Francesco Doni, Nicolò Franco, and Ortensio Lando (Madison, WI: 1969) 29–33; 154–155; 168–170; and Appendix V (253–254), which contains a detailed overview of the various Italian and French editions of *La Pazzia*. For the influence of Erasmus's *Moria* on Ariosto and Tasso, see Ossola C., "Métaphore et inventaire de la folie dans la littérature italienne du XVI^e siècle", in *Folie et déraison à la Renaissance* (Brussels: 1976) 171–188.

He was an avid translator and editor of ancient philosophical and rhetorical works, in particular by Aristotle and Cicero, but he also prepared editions of Petrarch's poetry and Boccaccio's *Decameron*. At the same time he participated in the Italian Reformation through his commentaries and annotations on Scripture and, more famously, as the author of the first Italian Bible translation in a Reformist vein: the 'Brucioli Bible' (1530–1532), dedicated to Francis I, would be used by Italian Protestants for several decades. His fame was finally obliterated by two well-documented trials by the Venetian Inquisition, which declared his religious writings heretical and ordered them burned.⁸

In literary circles, Brucioli was most known for his expansive collections of dialogues on a variety of moral and philosophical topics. The first sample of thirty *Dialogues on moral philosophy* (*Dialogi della morale filosofia*), published in 1526, bears the fruits of the debates on moral, civic, and political topics held among Florentine humanists, including Machiavelli, of the so-called 'Orti Oricellari group' (named after the gardens of the Rucellai family where it met). Brucioli's participated in this group before it was disbanded in 1522, when a number of participants, including Brucioli, were banished from the city after allegedly concocting a (failed) conspiracy against the Medici regime. Critics debate whether or not Brucioli meant to write an actual mirror of these debates or produce a more authentic work.⁹ However this may be, each of the dialogues in this first collection covers one of the stock topics of civic humanism (man's condition, family, education, marriage, the republic, civic and military leadership), as well as the Aristotelian virtues and Neoplatonic themes.

⁸ For the bio-bibliographical information on Brucioli, see in particular Spini G., *Tra Rinascimento e Riforma. Antonio Brucioli* (Florence: 1940), which is to date the only existing monograph on Brucioli. For his role in the publishing and printing world and in the complex religious landscape between Italian Reformation and Counter-Reformation, see also the recent collective volume by Boillet E. (ed.), *Antonio Brucioli. Humanisme et évangélisme entre Réforme et Contre-Réforme. Actes du colloque de Tours, 20–21 mai 2005* (Paris: 2008). For the Brucioli Bible, see Caponetto S., *The Protestant Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, transl. A. and J. Tedeschi (Kirkville, MO: 1999) 28–29; and for the heresy trials, see Del Col A., "Il controllo della stampa a Venezia e i processi di Antonio Brucioli (1548–1559)", *Critica storica* 17 (1980) 457–486.

⁹ For these debates, see Fachard D., "Entre utopie et réalité: Antonio Brucioli et la leçon machiavélienne", in Boillet, *Antonio Brucioli* 77–97; Spini, *Tra Rinascimento e Riforma* 139–169; Cantimori D., "Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism", trans. F. Yates, *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1, 2 (1937) 83–102; Dionisotti C., "La testimonianza del Brucioli", in his *Machiavellerie* (Turin: 1980) 193–226; and Landi A., "Nota critica" to his edition of the first volume of the dialogues (Brucioli Antonio, *Dialogi*, ed. A. Landi (Chicago-Naples: 1982) 553–588).

The first volume, the only one to be published in a modern edition, is generally considered Brucioli's most successful work for its humanist endeavour to apply moral wisdom to civic life. However, our author would assiduously continue to produce more dialogue collections in the following years (three more volumes during 1528 and 1529, on natural and metaphysical philosophy [*Della natural filosofia, Della metafisicale filosofia, Della natural filosofia umana*]), which he moreover meticulously revised and had twice republished in complete editions (Venice, Zanetti, 1537–1538; and Venice, Francesco ed Alessandro Brucioli, 1544–1545).¹⁰ The dialogue at the centre of this study, the *Dialogo della sapientia et della stultitia*, originally formed part of the very first 1526 edition of the *Dialogi della morale filosofia*. In the 1537–1538 complete edition, however, Brucioli removes it and groups it together with four dialogues taken from the other volumes in a separate fifth volume entitled *Dialogi faceti*, which he then however no longer included in the 1544–1545 edition of the dialogue volumes.¹¹ Spini surmises that Brucioli considered these five light-hearted and tongue-in-cheek 'digressions' out of place among the serious philosophical and scientific deliberations of the other volumes.¹²

The scholarly value judgements of Brucioli's literary dialogues vary:¹³ on the one hand, his dialogues display the typical hand of the polygraph, who, in his desire to make classical and contemporary moral wisdom easily available to his audience, selects, adapts, and vernacularizes a compendium from both ancient sources, such as Aristotle, Plato, and Cicero, and contemporary figures, including Leon Battista Alberti, Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas More and Erasmus. In doing so, he works hastily, barely mentioning his sources, and often misquoting or wrongly attributing source material. On the other hand, the rich publication history of his dialogues manifests their ongoing popularity, both in Italy and in France.¹⁴

¹⁰ For an overview of all editions, see Landi, "Nota critica" 571–574. Moreover, in the 1537–1538 edition he added three new dialogues.

¹¹ All quotations from the text in this article will be from this fifth volume in the 1537–1538 edition, which I consulted in the Newberry Library in Chicago.

¹² Spini, *Tra Rinascimento e Riforma* 183. The other four dialogues are entitled *Dialogo della virtù e dell'Angelo Michael* (also known as *Del lamento della virtù*), *Essempio della vita umana*, *Della conditione dell'huomo* (which, despite its serious title, stages two ants, one of which was a former human companion of Ulysses, transformed by Circe), discussing the sorry state of mankind, and finally a common-place *Della preheminentia delle arme et delle lettere*.

¹³ See footnote 9.

¹⁴ See above; and Lastraioli C., "Brucioli sconosciuto: de certaines traductions françaises des *Dialogi* et d'un manuscrit inconnu", in Boillet, *Antonio Brucioli* 147–173.

More importantly, a comparative textual analysis of his dialogues as he reworked them over time shows a Brucioli artfully experimenting with the dialogue form and keenly aware of developing practices of humanist dialogue writing in the early cinquecento. Brucioli eagerly participated in this tradition, which he referred to as 'this new and so uncommon way of writing', because he finds dialogue a most effective literary tool to propagate moral philosophy in the vernacular among an Italian audience.¹⁵ Between the first and the third edition, while barely touching the philosophical content of the dialogues, he would variously apply and transform rhetorical aspects of ancient dialogue models, for instance by recasting many dialogues into a more Ciceronian form that emphasizes aristocratic *ethos* and *decorum*. Moreover, he constantly varies the choice and staging of his interlocutors, substituting the fictitious characters with Greek and Latin names from the original edition with historically identifiable figures from Florentine and Venetian humanist and courtly circles.¹⁶ Brucioli's efforts clearly show that he did not just use dialogue to make classical and humanist wisdom available in the vernacular in a commercially successful format, but that it was his sincere aim to create an immediacy of the spoken exchange that helped his reader to apply a compendium of moral wisdom (much of which, we should add, was originally written in treatise form) to his or her sphere of action.

We should first distinguish Brucioli's dialogical adaptation of the *Praise of Folly* from his common practise of collecting and appropriating content material from other classical and contemporary sources. For instance, as noted by Seidel Menchi,¹⁷ in his dialogues on political issues closely related to his own context of the Florentine city-state, such as *Del giusto principe* (*On the Good Prince*) and *Della tirannide* (*On Tyranny*), Brucioli appropriates ideas from Erasmus's *Institutio Principis Christiani* in a 'patchwork' manner similar to his use of so many other sources, namely as one of many elements to constitute a context that is, in and of itself, fully extraneous to the concerns of the original authority from which he

¹⁵ See the dedicatory letter of his first edition: 'questo nuovo e tanto inusitato modo di scrivere' (Brucioli, *Dialogi* 11). The English translations of all Brucioli quotes in this article are my own. I thank my colleague Massimo Scalabrini for his assistance with the translation of some passages.

¹⁶ For these issues, see my "Dialogical Strategies, *volgarizzamento*, and Ciceronian *ethos* in Antonio Brucioli's *Dialogi della morale filosofia*", *Quaderni d'italianistica* 30, 2 (2009) 39–66.

¹⁷ Seidel Menchi, "La circolazione clandestina di Erasmo in Italia" 581–584.

borrow, quotes, or paraphrases (as is the case with Erasmus's political thinking, which does not concern the Florentine republic). In this sense, his *Della sapientia et della stultitia* is a genuine adaptation that reveals a more profound understanding of Erasmus's particular text: he adopts its basic premise, a paradoxical praise of Folly, as well as a large number of its arguments, but recasts these elements in a new literary form (the dialogue).

The *Della sapientia et della stultitia* is not the only example of this adaptive procedure: in the very same 1526 edition, Brucioli reworks along somewhat similar lines another Erasmian declamation, the *Encomium matrimonii*, into a dialogue entitled *Del matrimonio*.¹⁸ In that particular case, Brucioli does not just seek to circulate the content of Erasmus's biblical, theological, philosophical, and natural arguments against celibacy and in favour of marriage, but voices its *in utramque partem* structure in an intimate colloquy between two family members, one in favour of marriage and the other of celibacy (whereby it should be noted that, just as in the *Encomium matrimonii*, the pro-marriage voice vastly outweighs its opposing pro-celibacy voice). By valorising the dialogical dynamics implicit in Erasmus's exercise in epideictic rhetoric, Brucioli subtly embeds ideological content matter in the mimetics of a dialogical process of persuasion. The Erasmian declamation becomes an open-ended conversion of minds toward new ideas by persuasive dialogical speech that has the potential to be imitated in real life.

The *Dialogo della Sapientia e della Stultitia* opens *in medias res* with the voice of Stultitia (Folly) blaming Sapientia (Wisdom) for interfering with her endeavours ('mi ti vai raggirando intorno, mescolandoti delle cose del mondo' [fol. 1r] 'you keep fluttering around me, interfering with the matters of this world'). This kind of *incipit* is typical for Brucioli, who never opens his dialogues by a *narratio* in his own voice or that of a narrator,

¹⁸ An extensive discussion of this dialogical adaptation of Erasmus's *Praise of Marriage* (which, although of a different nature as a dialogue of civic humanism, manifests similarities to Brucioli's reworking of the *Praise of Folly*) can be found in my "Erasmian Rhetoric of Dialogue and Declamation and the Staging of Persuasion in Antonio Brucioli's *Dialogi della morale filosofia*", *Erasmus of Rotterdam Yearbook* 31 (2011) 61–84. Seidel Menchi also recognizes the special status of both dialogues in Brucioli's reception of Erasmian material, but, as I mentioned above, discusses them in the historical context of the influence of Erasmus's ideas and works on Italian humanist and religious movements, and does not focus on the recasting of literary and rhetorical forms ("La circolazione clandestina di Erasmo in Italia" 576–581).

but instantly goes to the mimesis of the spoken exchange, leaving it to the interlocutors themselves to evoke the details of time and spatial setting.¹⁹ The lucianic setting is one of *discordia* that squares off Stultitia against her opponent Sapientia in a series of biting replies ('Dimmi per cortesia, hai tu altro modo di questo da salutare?' [fol. 1r] 'Pray tell me, do you have no other way to greet me than this one?'). These replies already set up some of the recurrent themes of the dialogue: Sapientia accuses Stultitia of having a beastly nature and of being (indeed!) foolish while she claims her connection to prudence and constancy; Stultitia laments that Sapientia's words are but empty rhetoric while she herself is more useful for the survival of the human species.²⁰ Both claim to be goddesses and only later does it become clear that the two are meeting on the eve of a projected descent to earth, which will allow them to find out which one of them has the biggest share of followers there. Since they have to wait until dawn, Stultitia suggests they pass their time in a disputation on the question which one of them deserves more esteem. The winner can then peacefully rule mankind.²¹ It is not until the end of the text that it becomes clear that they are in fact standing at the gates of a city that is imaginary yet at the same time clearly recognizable from Sapientia's words as Rome ('non hai a fare niente di questa citta santa, ne della chiesa di dio, in questa per essa virtu fondata' [fol. 13r] 'you have no business in this holy city, nor in the

¹⁹ It should be noted that these strategies for opening the dialogue and creating its setting, while to a certain extent evoking Lucianic and Platonic forms, are mostly reminiscent of Erasmus's style from his earliest *familiarum colloquiorum formulae*, as I demonstrate in my "Erasmian Rhetoric of Dialogue and Declamation".

²⁰ 'SA. tu stultitia, come pazza e stolta che tu sei [...] non esci punto della natura tua bestiale' (fol. 1r) – 'Guarda monstro insolente, & che audacia ha questa matta' (fol. 2r) and 'STVL. io so piu utile di te alla humana generatione'; 'pasci i tuoi seguaci di parole' (fol. 4v) – 'Wisdom: you, Folly, since you are so foolish and crazy [...] you will never shed your beastly nature'; 'Look now, insolent monster, what audacity has this madwoman' and 'Folly: I am more useful than you for human procreation'; 'you feed your followers with words'.

²¹ 'STVL. Vedi, avenga che domani, al fare del giorno, noi ne potremo fare meglio la sperientia, & vedere chi è di noi in maggior pregio, nondimeno perché volendo ambedue entrare dentro alla terra, non ci possiamo partire di qui info à domattina, sara bene fatto, che ciascuna di noi dica la cagione, perche da piu, et di maggior stima dell'altra essere le pare [...] & sarebbono, da chi restasse vincitore pacificamente gli huomini governati' (fol. 2v) – 'Folly. Look, it happens to be so that tomorrow, at the crack of dawn, we can better put [our fame] to the test, and see which one of us has the better reputation. However, while we both want to descent on earth, since we cannot leave from here until tomorrow morning, it will be good if each of us explains why she believes to be of more and higher esteem than the other [...] and mankind will be peacefully governed by whomever results as the winner'.

church of god that was founded in her by virtue'). Both claim to have the larger share of followers in the eternal city.

Brucioli's Stultitia is largely modeled after Erasmus's counterpart in terms of origin and allegorical value. Like the latter, she claims her genealogy satirically *ex negativo*, i.e. not springing forth from the gods famously associated with the origin of the world, such as Chaos and Saturn, but simply as the daughter of Riches ('ricchezza'), the one who has the power to manage all human affairs, both worldly and sacred, to her will. Incidentally, the feminine gender of the noun *ricchezza* in Italian forces Brucioli to make Riches her mother rather than her father (called by the name of Plutus in Erasmus). Following Erasmus, the same parody of the noble birth is used to describe her birthplace, i.e. not the island of Delos (Apollo) nor the sea (Aphrodite), but the mythical Fortunate Isles, which are depicted as a fertile and cornucopian paradise. Like Moria, she came into the world laughing, her wet nurses are the nymphs Drunkenness and Ignorance, and the pageant of her followers displays the same figures as Moria's, namely Self-love, Flattery, Forgetfulness, Idleness, Pleasure, Madness, and Sensuality.²²

In terms of Stultitia's characteristics, however, Brucioli's protagonist cannot equal the dazzling complexity and transformative powers of Erasmus's creature, moving effortlessly between sweet irony, biting satire, and Christian joy.²³ Throughout the text, Stultitia is mostly associated with the happy, benevolent, and tolerant Moria from the first part of the *Moriae encomium* who praises Philautia's universally soothing powers: she professes the happiness and lasting health of her followers, whom she provides with laughter, exultation, song, dance, and games; she guarantees human procreation; and she acts as the bringer of illusions, vainglory, dissimulation, and playfulness, which are all necessary to render human life tolerable or even pleasant, for instance by making old age liveable and, like the sun, brightening the appearance of all things (e.g. fols. iv; 3r; 5v; 10v).²⁴ At times, she claims to be superior to Sapientia as a crucial force behind all human life ('nessuno possa piu vivere senza la mia deita'

²² Brucioli: fol. 3v-4r; Erasmus: ASD IV-3, 76-80; CWE 27, 88-89. With the exception of Plutus being Moria's father, Brucioli closely paraphrases Erasmus's text here.

²³ For Folly's transformations and the structure of Erasmus's text, see in particular Rebhorn W., "The Metamorphoses of Moria: Structure and Meaning in *The Praise of Folly*", *Publications of the Modern Language Association (PMLA)* 89 (1974) 463-476.

²⁴ Cf. ASD IV-3, 80-86; CWE 27, 90-93.

[fol. 1r] 'No one can live anymore without my divinity'),²⁵ and arrogates the function of the beneficial glue that guarantees the solidity and the smooth operation of all affective, social, and political relationships, such as marriage, family, and friendship, as well as those between the prince and his subjects and between the master and his servant.²⁶

Although Brucioli's *Stultitia* at times comes close to echoing *Moria's* more vehement and serious satire of philosophers and theologians lost in vain subtleties, and of popes and cardinals obsessed with the outward appearances of their ecclesiastical apparatus, *Stultitia* nevertheless tends to speak in a voice similar to the lightly ironic and burlesque *Moria* of the first part of the *Moriae encomium*. As for the philosophers and theologians, for instance, it may look like *Stultitia* reiterates *Moria's* vicious criticism from the serious middle stage of Erasmus's text. She has not a good word to spare for them and they do not seem to display any benign foolishness: they are harshly depicted as a sorry lot of destitute, introverted, and melancholic outcasts. In spite of their claims to the contrary, they are as much victim to the passions as anyone else and moreover they ruin their youth and health on unnecessary agitations of the mind, if they are not actually incarcerated or in exile (fols. 6v; 8v; 11r; 12r, 13r).²⁷

²⁵ Cf. ASD IV-3, 80: 'At sane parum sit mihi vitae seminarium ac fontem deberi'; CWE 27, 91: 'I am the source and seed of all existence'.

²⁶ A key passage in question has been translated almost literally from Erasmus: 'Et in somma nessuna societa, et nessuna congiuntione senza me è gioconda, ò stabile, in modo, che ne il popolo il principe, ne il servo il padrone, ne il precettore il discepolo, ne l'uno amico l'altro, ne il marito la moglie, ne il padre il figliuolo potrebbe lungamente sopportare, se infra se scambievolmente non s'andassino adulando, et hora con uno mele, et hora con un'altro si dolciissimo' (fol. 8r) – 'And in short, no society nor bond can be joyful or even stable, without me, because a people could not tolerate for long a prince, nor a servant his master, a teacher his student, a friend another friend, a husband his wife, a father his son, if they did not mutually flatter each other, and sweeten their bond now with this kind then with another kind of honey'. Cf. ASD IV-3, 94: 'In summa usqueadeo nulla societas, nulla vitae coniunctio sine me vel iucunda vel stabilis esse potest, ut ne populus principem nec servum herus nec heram pedisequa nec discipulum praeceptor nec amicus amicum nec maritum uxor nec locator conductorem nec contubernalis contubernalem nec convictor convictorem diutius ferat, nisi vicissim inter sese nunc errent, nunc adulentur, nunc prudentes conniveant, nunc aliquo stulticiae melle sese delineant'; CWE 27, 98: 'In short, no association or alliance can be happy or stable without me. People can't tolerate a ruler, nor can a master his servant, a maid her mistress, a teacher his pupil, a friend his friend nor a wife her husband, a landlord his tenant, a soldier his comrade nor a party-goer his companion, unless they sometimes have illusions about each other, make use of flattery, and have the sense to turn a blind eye and sweeten life for themselves with the honey of folly'.

²⁷ Cf. ASD IV-3, 96–100; 112–116; CWE 27, 99–101; 108–111. Brucioli borrows two specific images from Erasmus: wise men damage their princes' delicate ears with bitter and dark truths; and once you bring them to a party they dance like camels.

However, we should remember that Brucioli's Stultitia is in contest with an allegorized wisdom, therefore wise men cannot actually be claimed by her at all (unlike Moria, who lists them among her followers but, at least in the middle part of her speech, attacks their foolishness and self-love so viciously that we can no longer speak of a praise of folly). More importantly, Brucioli's satire remains rather lukewarm by dwelling on their behaviour, unhappy life-style, and haggard outward appearance. It does not go as far as to attack their accomplishments (which, one could say, are as a matter of fact defended in Brucioli's text by Sapientia's replies) as viciously and relentlessly as does Moria, who denounces philosophers' and theologians' knowledge as empty, vain, arrogant, impious, and dangerous nonsense.²⁸

This is particularly true for passages concerning clerics, priests, and Church dignitaries. Brucioli's Stultitia remains in her role of underlining the folly of their occupations as a soothing and self-delusory comedy. She does not engage in the long, comprehensive, and biting serious anti-ecclesiastical satire of the second part of the *Moriae encomium* that made her Erasmian counterpart so (in)famous, i.e. where Moria has become tragic and seems no longer to be praising folly but rather attacking it.²⁹ The only passage in which Brucioli comes close to a concrete and direct satirical attack of prelates and high ecclesiastical leaders ('i sommi sacri, et santi sacerdoti, et prelati', fol. 6v) echoes indeed a corresponding passage adapted from Moria's serious stage, but Brucioli focuses more indulgently (even if clearly still sarcastically) on the bodily benefices Stultitia has brought them after she managed to lure them out of from Sapientia's realms: before they were 'di vile sacco vestiti, macinolenti, spurcidi, stentati, con la buccia à pena in su l'osso parendo per le troppe loro vigilie, orationi et digiuni... che ci stessino à pigione, tenendo l'anima co denti' whereas now they are 'gagliardi, grassi, freschi, et validi della persona con quelle belle veste di seta sopra le mule tanto ricamente ornate, che paiono uno triumpho à vedergli' (fol. 6v).³⁰ Brucioli does not go as far as Erasmus who had seriously attacked their reprehensible actions, foolish arrogance, bellicose attitude, and misguided obsession with materialist

²⁸ ASD IV-3, 144–158; CWE 27, 125–130.

²⁹ ASD IV-3, 158–168; 170–176; CWE 27, 130–135; 137–141.

³⁰ '[...] clad in poor rags, emaciated, filthy, miserable, with their skin hanging on their bones, and it seemed that because of their excessive vigils, prayers, and fasting they lived in their body as if in a rental property, holding their souls by their teeth' and 'vigorous, plump, fresh, and robust of person, with beautiful silken clothes, seated on richly ornated mules, triumphant in their appearance'.

possessions, so condemned by Christ himself, which they would lose once they obtain wisdom.³¹

To be sure, Brucioli is as critical of the Roman Church as is Erasmus. The mere fact that the goal of the debate is to find out who has the most followers in the Holy City, with Stultitia repeatedly claiming it is her, shows, as Seidel Menchi observes, that Brucioli has reduced Erasmus's more general satire of corrupted Church practices into an anti-Roman and anti-curial framework. Yet to conclude, as she does, that Brucioli seeks to create a more efficient anti-ecclesiastical polemic is, I believe, not warranted by the overall tenor of the dialogue, which voices such reformist anti-Roman satire much too sporadically.³² Rather, as we will see, Brucioli's goal was to relocate the paradox of Folly regarding the nature of folly and wisdom in a ludic rhetorical and dialogical exercise, and not, as his Dutch counterpart, to propagate an evangelist and reformist agenda. This also explains why the famous last part from Erasmus's *Moriae encomium*, where Moria defends the Christian folly to renounce worldly existence in order to obtain Christian joy and wisdom, finds no echoes whatsoever in Brucioli's text.

Brucioli's originality consists in heightening the rhetorical nature of Stultitia by staging her as one of two skilfully arguing interlocutors in a vivacious oral *disputatio*. In doing so, he develops certain aspects of Erasmus's Moria, who is an inherently oratorical creature alternating between the voices of the sophist, the classical rhetorician, and the carnivalesque preacher of the medieval *sermon joyeux*. The interlocutorial other of Moria is her own audience, whose voice we never hear in direct discourse but which she actively involves: she continually poses rhetorical questions, soliciting answers but providing them herself; she frequently encourages the members of the audience to listen up; and from time to time she voices their potential rhetorical counterarguments ('Sed mihi videor *audire recalamantes philosophos*. Atqui hoc ipsum est, inquit, miserum, stulticia teneri, errare, falli, ignorare. Imo hoc est hominem esse' [ASD IV-3, 110]).³³

³¹ In the middle of her tirade, Moria ironically comments on the seriousness of her own satire in a parenthetical remark, ASD IV-3, 17: 'Videtis quantas nundinas, quantam messem, quantum bonorum pelagus paucis sim complexa', CWE 27, 138: 'You'll note how much trafficking and harvesting and what a vast sea of profiteering I have covered in a few words'.

³² Seidel Menchi, "La circolazione clandestina di Erasmo in Italia" 580.

³³ CWE 27, 106: 'Now I believe *I can hear the philosophers protesting* that it can only be misery to live in folly, illusion, deception, and ignorance. But it isn't, it's human'.

In Brucioli's text, Folly's role has shifted to that of a real dialogical interlocutor while the audience's part has been reduced to that of listening and witnessing the exchange as if in a theatre performance. Stultitia's speaking is constantly offset by the voice of her opponent Sapientia who occupies a virtually equal amount of text and replies.

Brucioli's Sapientia claims that she herself is the sole force dominating the universe ('Io quella fui che i Cieli ordinai di giro in giro, & con la mirabile mia omnipotentia feci in quegli nascere il lume, che mai non manca', fol. 4v),³⁴ a goddess therefore more perfect than the sun and the heavens (fol. 5r); she is born from the head of Jupiter and escorted by four helpers, Prudence, Temperance, Justice, and Fortitude (fols. 1v; 4v), whose advice she follows in ruling the universe; she compares herself to the pearl ('quella pretiosa Margarita' [fol. 3r]), used metaphorically by Jesus in his parable describing the value of the kingdom of heaven (*Matt.* 13:45–46), since all who find her give up all other material possessions in exchange for eternal peace and happiness; she distinguishes man from the animal (fol. 3v) and assures his immortal fame (fol. 6r); she guarantees the peaceful ruling of kingdoms and republics (fol. 5r); and, most notably, she defends and glorifies the accomplishments and moral precepts of philosophy and philosophers from the major ancient schools (fols. 6r; 7r; 7v; 8r; 11v).

As we have seen, their *discordia* is born from, and largely driven by, what Sapientia considers Stultitia's unwelcome intrusion in her domain (fols. 1r; 8r; 14r). She often compares it to that of a mortal disease of body and mind ('una velenosa peste' [fol. 3r]; 'uno pestifero morbo della mente, et dell'animo' [fol. 10r]) while Stultitia on the other hand claims to be the saviour of a mankind that would otherwise wither away. Aside from the longer replies that cover the thematic issues discussed above (the values of philosophy, social and political cohesion, mankind's worth and survival in creation, etc.), both speakers often engage in a quick and witty bickering that occupies a good part of the text and creates an atmosphere reminiscent of Lucian's dialogues and Erasmus's *Colloquies*.³⁵

Compared to the multiple levels of irony and satire voiced by Erasmus's Moria, Brucioli's dialogical allegory of Folly and Wisdom, and the

³⁴ 'I was the one who put in motion all the circles of Heaven, and with my splendid omnipotence, I brought forth eternal light in them'.

³⁵ For instance after Stultitia's praise of the attributes of fools: 'SAP. Una cosa doveresti aggiungere loro. STUL. Et che? SAP. Et non fanno mai nulla, che bene stia. STUL. Ecco à dire parole ingiuriose' (fol. 10r) – 'SAP. One more thing you should add to them. STUL. And that is? SAP. That they never accomplish anything good. STUL. Now that's what I call an insult!'

values they embody, may at first seem simplifying. Aside from keeping Stultitia light-hearted and drastically reducing the numerous erudite allusions that fill the pages of the *Moriae encomium*, Brucioli also attempts, one could argue with Seidel Menchi, to temper the complex and ambiguous voice of Erasmian Folly in a plain binary structure. This would fit the Manichean world of his moral dialogues, which represent a florilegium of classical wisdom that neatly opposes good and evil and vice and virtue (an argument that holds water in particular if we consider that this dialogue, before becoming part of the *Dialogi faceti*, appeared first in Brucioli's 1526 volume of *Dialogi della morale filosofia*). In this view, Brucioli's text stages a stilted and formal Stoic Wisdom to corner a weakened Folly in a morally negative role in an effort to 'counterbalance and correct' the Erasmian model.³⁶

One issue with this argument, however, is that the values of wisdom and folly in Moria's paradoxical encomium can never really be disentangled. As we saw, Erasmus's Moria tends to claim herself, i.e. foolishness, as the single-most dominating force of the universe. Yet there is of course a lowly wisdom in a universe that runs smoothly because of beneficial illusions. Likewise, there are very perilous, or rather, seriously foolish consequences to the supposedly wise discourses and actions that Moria attacks as the mischievous idiocy of moral, civic, and religious leaders. As has been discussed by critics such as Wayne Rebhorn and Walter Kaiser, Moria constantly metamorphosizes and turns inside out the values that we seemingly associate with one or the other, such as prudence with wisdom and self-love with folly. Prudence as a knowledge of the world that assists us in taking the right action without rashness seems indeed an asset of the wise, but it becomes an attribute of the fool when Moria makes us realize that we cannot have this knowledge of the world without having first rushed foolishly into the world, which is dominated by Folly anyways. Self-love as a self-deception with outward appearances is indeed foolish, while self-esteem that translates into a mutual respect for others is wise.³⁷ In other words, Moria's transformative voice contains an inherent 'dialogicity'. Just as a dialogue in the open-ended Ciceronian *in utramque partem* style, featuring multiple and equally worthy speakers

³⁶ Seidel Menchi, "La circolazione clandestina di Erasmo in Italia" 581.

³⁷ Kaiser W., *Praisers of Folly: Erasmus, Rabelais, Shakespeare* (Cambridge, MA: 1963) 51–83; Rebhorn, "The Metamorphoses of Moria" 464–466.

and arguments, it allows social, moral, and religious values to acquire other meanings if they are voiced in a different manner.

The mere fact that Brucioli's *discordia* lacks a clear outcome or winner shows that its author is sensitive to this complexity of Moria's speaking and that he uses dialogue to explore the ongoing playful interdependence, rather than the resolution, of the notions of Folly and Wisdom, as if they were two lenses through which to see the (same) world. The replies the interlocutors exchange frequently reveal this interdependence. For instance, while both rhetorically claim that they are the universe's dominant force, they also remind each other that they are antagonistic but complementary counterparts to each other's functioning. After one of Sapientia's claims that a world without folly is perfect, Stultitia astutely points out that nothing in life can be accomplished without her helping hands ('aiutrici mani' [fol. 5r]) and assistance ('non è cosa, che al mondo si potesse condurre senza l'*aiuto mio* o delle mie fide seguaci mie' [fol. 5r] [there is not a thing that one can accomplish in this world *without my help* and that of my faithful followers]), suggesting that the universe thrives by their interconnectedness. Likewise, when Sapientia blames Stultitia for being a sickness of the mind to which only the healing action of Sapientia can bring relieve, the use of the same vocabulary ('la Sapientia, come perfetto Medico, vi porga *le aiutrici mani*' [fol. 10r]) suggests that Sapientia could in fact not exist if the perturbations of the mind would not have been there in the first place to be cured. Stultitia's comparison of her function to that of life's 'great seasoning' ('il grandissimo *condimento* delle mie opere' [fol. 5r]) embodied, for instance, by the buffoon providing entertainment at the banquets of philosophers and kings, of which Sapientia can only describe the spiritual merits (fol. 7r), further implies that wisdom cannot exist without inherent folly. As a final example, one can point to one of the typical images of wisdom, the grey and wise old man. Who could ever suffer to listen to such an old man with a lot of valuable life-experience ('tanta esperienza di cose' [fol. 5v]) if his soul is as rigid, his judgment as acrimonious, and the expression of severity in his face as unpleasant as he is wise? Only the benefits of folly would endow him with the skills for a pleasant and joyful conversation similar to that of young people. This appearance does not make him a fool (i.e. 'unwise'), but rather it allows his wisdom to be spread more efficiently.

Even more striking is how Brucioli employs Sapientia's and Stultitia's dialogical *discordia* to mime this interdependence in its rhetorical form and, going even further, to suggest the very interchangeability of the notions folly and wisdom. In a number of replies both interlocutors, but

Stultitia most purposefully, reveal that the contrast between folly and wisdom is ultimately only an oratorical question. In other words, Moria's paradox pertains to *verba*, i.e. the way we *linguistically* frame matters and *speak* about them, not to *res*, i.e. the actual human values themselves and whether or not they are inherently wise or foolish. Thus Brucioli's dialogue valorises the paradox of folly as a ludic oratorical exercise, which has its origin in the nature of Erasmus's *Moria* as a mock-encomium. As Walter Kaiser points out, Moria is doing *self*-praise, but mockingly so, a speech situation that gives rise to a 'vertiginous semantic labyrinth' since she is not only the subject of her speech but also its speaker: 'For the praise of folly, being a *mock* praise, is in fact the censure of folly; but if Folly is thus censuring folly, Wisdom would presumably praise folly. [...] But if Folly praises wisdom, then Wisdom would presumably censure wisdom'.³⁸ According to Kaiser, these oratorical paradoxes are further complicated by one of Folly's claims that 'rem dicam prima fronte stultam fortassis atque absurdam, sed tamen unam multo verissimam' (*ASD* IV-3, 114) ('perhaps what I am saying seems foolish and absurd at first sight, but really it's a profound truth' [*CWE* 17, 109]). The reader is thus stuck in 'an insoluble dilemma of permanent uncertainty' similar to the Cretan's famous statement that Cretans always lie.³⁹ Following Kaiser's line of reasoning on Moria's paradoxical oratorical nature in Erasmus, one could thus argue that the ludic back-and-forth oscillation between folly and wisdom is at all times a mere issue of how we *speak* about it. This makes the paradox of a folly *versus* wisdom argumentation an utterly ironical *in utramque partem* construction that has ultimately no connection to reality (since both lie in the eye of the beholder and are two sides of the same medal). Therefore it can exist only as an oratorical game that evolves around how and with whose voice we speak about it. Brucioli's achievement has been to cast this game in another rhetorical shape by doubling Moria's voice in dialogue.

³⁸ Kaiser, *Praises of Folly* 36. See also *ASD* IV-3, 72: 'Iam uero non huius facio sapientes istos qui stultissimum et insolentissimum esse praedicant, si quis ipse laudibus se ferat. Sit sane quam volent stultum, modo decorum esse fateantur. Quid enim magis quadrat quam ut ipsa Moria suarum laudum sit buccinatrix, et *Autê heautês aulê*? Quis enim me melius exprimat quam ipsa me?'; *CWE* 27, 86: 'Now, I don't think much of those wisecracks who maintain it's the height of folly and conceit if anyone speaks in his own praise; or rather, it can be as foolish as they like, as long as they admit it's in character. What could be more fitting than for Folly to trumpet her own merits abroad and sing her own praises? Who could portray me better than I can myself?.'

³⁹ Kaiser, *Praises of Folly* 36.

A first textual element to underline in support of this claim is the conspicuously oral nature of Brucioli's *discordia*. It is less about the outcome of the issue at stake (who is more worth and should be in charge of the universe?) than about displaying rhetorical muscle power. Spoken words mime fist blows and physical strength in this lucianic whirlwind of repartees, replies, and childish bickering, whereby the colloquial more than once borders on insult. It suffices to quote one of Stultitia's opening remarks: '[m]olto meglio sarebbe à te *parlarti con le mani*' [fol. 1r] [It would be better *to talk to you using fists*]). Sapiaientia's recurrent insult of Stultitia that she is an animal and a fool suggests that she considers her not in possession of reasonable human speech and therefore unworthy of spoken debate ('Et come potre io mai mostrare quello ch'io sono, et vaglio, à pazzi?' [fol. 4v] [How could I ever explain to fools who I am and what I am worth?]; 'con uno pazzo non si puo mai stare in capitale' [fol. 2r] [With a fool you can neither win nor loose]). Stultitia relentlessly keeps pointing out that Sapiaientia's speech may well serve to inflict insult and hurt, but ultimately consists only of empty phrases that hide no real meaning: 'con *i sconi parlari*, hai per natura di fare a ciascuno *ingiuria* [...] se tu havessi alcuna ragione per difendere la parte tua, tu la diresti & non andresti per *queste tue cavillationi* come sempre sei solita di fare quando ti mancano le ragioni da dire' (fol. 2v).⁴⁰

From the last quote clearly emerges Stultitia's rhetorical strategy of unveiling the way in which Sapiaientia pretends to frame a false truth (i.e. wisdom prevails over folly) in an abundance of words. Stultitia reveals that Wisdom (both the interlocutor and the notion) is doing nothing but giving an excessive attention to *verba* over *res*. Time and again, she replies that Sapiaientia's speaking is an ingenious and arrogant crafting of empty words to enthrall her followers: '[tu] pasci i tuoi seguaci di parole' (fol. 1v) (you feed your followers with words); 'tutte le tue ragioni, & opre, infino a qui mi paiono *ciance fondate in aria* piu belle à dire che à menarle a effetto' (fol. 2v) (all your arguments and works, so far, seem to me but *babble made of air*; they sound good but nothing comes of them); 'io veramente non aspettavo altro da te, che *una abondantia di magnifiche & ampullose parole*, come tu, & i tuoi seguaci havesti sempre per usanza di dire' (fol. 4v) (I truly did not expect anything else from you than an

⁴⁰ 'It is in your nature to insult everyone with your indecent talk... if you had any good reason to defend your side, you would say it and not lose yourself in hairsplitting as you always do when you lack the foundation of what you're saying'. See also fols. 3r; 5v; 8v; 10r; 13r; 14r-v.

abundance of pompous and bombastic words that you and your followers are used to speak); and 'queste tue cose finte con uno aggiramento di parole, che di manco si torrebbe il capo ad uno huomo di marmo' (fol. 13r) (those topics of you faked in a twisting of words that would make even a marble statue lose its head). To be sure, Stultitia indirectly echoes some of Erasmus's criticisms of the false rhetoric of sophists, orators, philosophers, and theologians, and in general we should keep in mind that Moria often praises herself for being able to speak simply, without ornamentation, and honestly.⁴¹ The value of Brucioli's adaptation, however, lies in mimetically staging in a dialogized *discordia* between an allegorized folly and wisdom the exclusively linguistic and oratorical nature of the paradox of Folly.

Moreover, the opening part of the dialogue purposefully plays with various ambiguities in the speakers' interlocutorial positions that further underline their exchangeability. After one of his replies, Sapientia notices that Stultitia is laughing and says 'Tu ridi *matta*?' (Are you *crazily* laughing?). Stultitia first points out that anyone would laugh at Sapientia's talking and then reminds her that she probably means 'to laugh *wisely*' ('ma intendi *sanamente*'). For Sapientia this is the typical absurdity of the fool: 'con uno pazzo non si puo mai stare in capitale' (fol. 2r) – 'with a fool you can neither win nor lose'; for Stultitia it means, as she underlines later, that insulting her by saying she is a fool, is in reality a compliment: 'Tu credi forse per dirmi *pazza*, farmi evidentemente ingiuria, et io ti dico, che *ingiuria* mi faresti tu, quando mi dicessi *savia*' (fol. 5v) – 'You think perhaps that by calling me a fool you insult me, but I tell you that you would insult me if you'd call me wise'. By pointing out this fallacy in Sapientia's disputational strategy, Stultitia underlines the purely oratorical nature of a debate in which two words (*verba*: foolishly and wisely) can be exchanged for the same idea (*res*: in this case, simply, to laugh in a certain way).

To be sure, these kinds of ambiguities often surface even in Moria's speech, especially in the second part of the *Moriae encomium* when she engages so seriously in satirizing the foolish behaviour of some social and religious types that she sometimes needs to remind herself she is supposed

⁴¹ ASD IV-3, 74: 'A me extemporariam quidem illam et illaboratam, sed tanto veriorum audietis orationem'; CWE 27, 87: 'From me you're going to hear a speech which is extempore and quite unprepared, but all the more genuine for that'; ASD IV-3, 104: 'Id si cui forte nimis philosophice dictum videtur, age pinguiore, quemadmodum dici solet, Minerva planius faciam'; CWE 27, 103: 'Maybe some of you will think I expressed this too philosophically; well, I'll speak bluntly, as they say, to make myself clear'.

to praise folly and blame wisdom.⁴² While these moments are but inconsistencies that only reveal the complexity of Erasmus's staging of Moria's transformations, this kind of linguistic ambiguity becomes in Brucioli the very underlying rhetorical principle of his *discordia* on folly's paradox.

Another telling slip in Sapientia's tactics further exemplifies this idea. When Stultitia says 'io ti voglio *dire* una cosa, che mi pare, che tu non *sappia*' (fol. 2r) – 'I want to *tell* you something I think you do not *know*', a clueless Sapientia answers 'Et che mi potresti tu mai dire ch'io non sapessi?' (fol. 2v) – 'what could you possibly *tell* me that I do not yet *know*?'. Sapientia thereby implicitly acknowledges that whatever Stultitia *says* is wise because it is already *known* by herself, Sapientia. The corollary of this idea is that, when Stultitia 'speaks' this knowledge, it becomes foolish, which implies that that which is known (*res*), by extension all 'wisdom' or 'foolishness', is fundamentally the same. This passage should moreover be considered in connection with Stultitia's later reproach of wise men to speak with two tongues: 'de sapienti sono due lingue, con l'una delle quali dicono il vero, et con l'altra quelle cose, che secondo il tempo giudicarono che fossino opportune' (fol. 11v).⁴³ Like that of their allegorical counterpart Sapientia, the speaking of wise men is often a mere oratorical construction (*verba*), even though, if they really want, they are just as able to speak what they know to be true (*res*).

In these passages, Brucioli's *discordia* mimetically exemplifies, more than the interconnectedness, the sameness of the notions of folly and wisdom at the level of content, as *res*, and thus playfully suggests that the strife between wisdom and folly exists only as a rhetorical construction of voices. Several other passages further sustain this argument. First, when Stultitia proposes the rules of the debate they agree to have before testing their popularity on earth, she predicts the outcome of their contention as either Sapientia rendering Stultitia wise, or vice-versa: 'Et à questo modo forse potrebbe venire fatto, ò che *tu facessi savia me*, della quale cosa mi guardi Iddio, ò ch'io *facessi te pazza*, onde tutta la discordia nostra qui finirebbe' (fol. 2v) – 'And in this manner it could perhaps happen either that you make me wise, of which God may preserve me, or that I make you foolish, at which point our dispute would end'. This passage is mirrored

⁴² For instance ASD IV-3, 164: 'Audiui ipsa quendam eximie *stultum* – erravi, *doctum* volebam dicere'; CWE 27, 133: 'I myself have heard one notable *fool* – I'm sorry, I meant to say *scholar*'.

⁴³ 'The wise have two tongues: with the one they speak the truth, with the other they say the things they thought to be appropriate at the time'. Erasmus also calls rhetoricians 'bilingues' (ASD IV 3, 76) (CWE 27, 88: 'twin-tongued').

toward the end, when Stultitia notices in her very last reply, which also closes their dialogue, how the earth's gates are opening while their debate has remained inconclusive. She hopes that the popularity test will prove her the winner and if not: 'io non sia la pazzia, ma uscita di me, *sia divenuta savia*, della quale cosa Iddio sempre mi guardi' (fol. 14v) – 'I am not folly, but, having stepped out of myself, *I would have become wisdom*, which God may forever forbid'. Stultitia suggests here that one interlocutor can *become* the other as the outcome of the disputation. This ludic interchangeability of the voices of allegories of the notions of folly and wisdom (*res*) suggests that their dialogue is an oratorical exercise in constructing voices (*verba*) that mime the paradoxical nature of Erasmus's Moria, speaking both wisely and foolishly.

In a further complicating twist, when Sapientia, in Stultitia's view, makes herself again guilty of merely throwing around 'magnifiche parole' (big words), Stultitia reminds her that, in and of itself, this too is an act of foolishness: 'se io t'ho a dire il vero, tutte nascono dal mio fonte, perche non altro è gia che pazzia il parergli essere da piu che l'huomo non è' (fol. 6r) – 'if I need tell you the truth, [these words] are all born from my own source because it is nothing but foolishness for man to want to seem bigger than oneself'. While Sapientia as the embodiment of wisdom is thus criticized for doing nothing else than giving an excessive attention to *verba* over *res*, the very desire to do so, paradoxically, is also revealed as a form of folly in Stultitia's voice. This reminds us not only that wisdom and folly depend on how we construct things rhetorically but also that a disputation on the respective values of each can only exist in language.

As a final example, we should discuss the passage in which Stultitia praises the simple language of people living in the Golden Age's reign of natural law (a period she associates with the reign of pure, undisturbed folly) because it made no distinction between the meaning of the words 'wisdom' and 'folly'. The observation is made within a long reply by Stultitia, largely paraphrased from a passage in the *Moriae encomium* (ASD IV-3, 110–111; *CWE* 27, 107), in which Moria vituperates against grammar, rhetoric, and dialectics as twisted inventions made in later ages by human minds under the influence of wisdom. These linguistic arts and skills were not necessary for those who lived in the happy concord of nature: grammar was not needed since people perfectly understood each other in the same language; nor was dialectics, since there was no difference of opinion between them; nor rhetoric, since no one was in need of defending any case made by anyone else (fol. 9v). She goes on listing other assets associated with wisdom, such as jurisprudence and theology, both superfluous during the pristine times of the reign of folly when laws were not

necessary, religion was universal, and no one strove to know with 'impious curiosity' ('impia curiosita' [fol. 9v]) divine matters that are not meant to be known by man.

The idea of a shared meaning for the words wisdom and folly is not in Erasmus and has been added by Brucioli:

[...] mutati i significati de nomi, tanto voleva dire pazzia in loro linguaggio, quanto sapienzia, et tanto sapienzia, quanto pazzia, ma perdendosi poco a poco la purita di quel primo secolo au reo, primamente (come io t'ho detto) da perversi, et malvagi ingegni furno le varietà dell'*arti* trovate, et le tue discipline liberali, tanto ch'io ne fu quasi per perdere il mio dominio, che sarebbe stata una cosa molto mal fatta. (fol. 9v)⁴⁴

From a linguistic point of view, this passage puts the paradox of wisdom and folly on a temporal axis. Once they were fundamentally the same, and the nouns 'wisdom' and 'folly' could be perfectly interchanged to signify the same idea. Later, however, post-lapsarian linguistic and rhetorical perversions of the human mind have given us the false impression that the two signifiers refer to two different signified. We should not be too confused by the fact that Stultitia is accusing Sapientia, the divine power of visual and liberal arts, to have brought about this tragic change, nor by the fact that Stultitia claims this 'sameness' of the substance of folly and wisdom as a product of her reign. After all, from the perspective of the people in the Golden Age, the idea of striving to create hair-splitting complexities of language, dialectics, and rhetoric, just as the wish to know divine matters or to regulate the universe by human laws, would certainly have been considered a foolish undertaking. Thus, the Golden Age was as much 'wise' as it was the domain of Stultitia, a paradox that further underlines the interchangeability of wisdom and folly.

In conclusion, Brucioli's *Dialogo della sapientia et della stultitia* does much more than merely recasting in dialogue and in an Italian cultural and literary context some of the *Moriae encomium*'s well-known satirical material denouncing Church abuses. His ludic *disputatio* is an example of an ingenious reworking of the linguistic and rhetorical paradoxes of Erasmus's *Moria* in the emerging form of the Renaissance dialogue. His speakers

⁴⁴ '[...] the meaning of the nouns having since changed, *folly in their language still meant the same as wisdom, and wisdom the same as folly*. But since the purity of that first century was gradually lost to evil, the perverted and wicked minds in particular (as I told you) established the variety of the visual arts, as well as your liberal arts, so much so that I almost lost my power, which would have been a terrible thing'.

mimetically exemplify a fundamental sameness of the notions of folly and wisdom at the level of substance. The dialogue recasts the paradox of wisdom and folly as a purely rhetorical game, existing as an exchange of *verba* voiced by two interlocutors who are the embodiments of the same original oratorical voice borrowed from Erasmus: the mockingly self-praising allegory of Folly. Brucioli's text is a unique adaptation of Moria's multiple layers in the rhetorical versatility of the Renaissance dialogue.

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ERASMUS AND THE RADICAL ENLIGHTENMENT:
AN ATHEISTIC ADAPTATION OF *THE PRAISE OF FOLLY*
BY JAN VAN DER WYCK (1798)

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The end of the eighteenth century saw the publication of a curious Dutch booklet which presented itself as an 'imitation' of Erasmus's *Moria*. It appeared at Grave (in the south of the Netherlands) in 1798 and was printed by Adrianus van Dieren. The title was not especially elegant: *Navolging nopens Lof der Zotheid*, that is *Imitation concerning Praise of Folly*, where we might have expected *Imitation of the Praise of Folly*. Only one copy of the booklet has survived; it is to be found in the Library of Tilburg University (shelf number TRE C 0143), where it came from a provincial library at Den Bosch, just like the famous Scriverius manuscript, our only source for a number of Erasmus's poems.

The author of this late eighteenth-century *Imitation* was major Jan van der Wyck. Very little is known about him. Gerbrand Bruining (1764–1833), a friend who was later to become his opponent, refers to him in his memoirs as 'Baron van der Wyck'.¹ This was certainly an exaggeration; in the genealogy of this noble (but not baronial) family we come across a Jan van der Wyck (1762–1833), who married Eva Alida Paape in 1804; he is probably the man we are looking for. His father Jan Hendrik van der Wyck (1731–1809), was lord of Stoevelaer but had not been admitted to the *Ridderschap* of Overijssel.² This does not preclude the possibility that Jan van der Wyck may have styled himself baron, since in the Régiment Royal Liégeois he was later to join there was a second lieutenant whose name is

¹ Bruining Gerbrand, *Herinneringen met betrekking tot de omwentelingen in Staat en Kerk, gedurende zynen levensloop* (Dordrecht: 1830) 55–57, 68, 203, 308. For Bruining, see Heijting W., "Gerbrand Bruining, broodschrijver", in Gerits A., *For Bob de Graaf: Antiquarian Bookseller, Publisher, Bibliographer. Festschrift on the occasion of his 65th birthday* (Amsterdam: 1992) 127–135; Vuyk S., *De verdraagzame gemeente van vrije christenen. Remonstranten op de bres voor de Bataafse Republiek (1780–1800)* (Amsterdam: 1995) 263–267, 278–280, 389–391; idem, *Uitdovende Verlichting. Remonstranten als deftige vaderlanders 1800–1860* (Amsterdam: 1998) 128–142.

² *Nederland's Adelsboek* 1953 482–483. This non-noble branch of the Van der Wycks died out in 1843.

given as 'M. le Baron Vanderwick van Stoevelaer'.³ We owe it to Bruining that we have at least *some* information about Van der Wyck.⁴ His command of French seems to have been rather good, at least good enough for him to condemn Bruining's French as inauthentic, and to persuade the latter to stop writing a philosophical novel in that language. As a young man Van der Wyck was highly impressed by Rousseau's *Contrat social*, and he liked speculating about metaphysics and politics. However, he chose a military career. Politically he was in favour of the Patriots and got involved in their actions. At some moment he was considered a deserter, and as a consequence had to travel around in civilian clothes.⁵

After the revolutionary actions of the Patriots had been thwarted in 1787 thanks to the intervention of Prussian troops, a large number of Patriots went into exile. Many of them settled in French St. Omer, the soldiers among them in Béthune. Van der Wyck joined the French army and was assigned to the recently established Régiment Royal Liégeois.⁶ In the Netherlands the tables were turned in 1795. The reign of the Stadtholder and his Orangists came to an end. Early in 1795 French armies invaded the Netherlands, where many people welcomed them as liberators.⁷ After the foundation of the Batavian Republic in 1795 Van der Wyck joined the 'third battalion of the seventh half-brigade' of the Batavian Army. As to his intellectual interests, his extensive reading and studying had eventually resulted in a burnout. For two years he felt incapable of reading anything, even writing a letter was almost too great a burden for him. He had come to the conclusion that no true certainty was to be expected from metaphysics.⁸

³ See www.napoleon-series.org/military/organization/etat (Etat militaire de France pour l'année 1789). Cf. Rosendaal J., *Bataven! Nederlandse vluchtelingen in Frankrijk 1787–1795* (Nijmegen: 2003) 495 referring to a letter written to L. van Beyma by the second lieutenant 'Jan van der Wyck van Stevelaer.'

⁴ Bruining Gerbrand, *Alle redelijk geloof aan God en Jesus van den blaam van zotternij vrijgepleit, in een vriendelijken brief aan Jan van der Wijck, Majoor bij het derde bataillon der zevende halve Brigade enz.* (Amsterdam, Matthijs Schalekamp: 1799).

⁵ Bruining, *Herinneringen* 55–57, 68.

⁶ Bruining, *Herinneringen* 203; cf. Rosendaal J.G.M.M., "Geene Heeren Meer, Zalige Egalité. De door de Franse overheid ondersteunde gevluchte patriotse burgers, 1787–1794", *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie en het Iconografisch Bureau* 49 (1995) 107–164.

⁷ Bruining, *Alle redelijk geloof* 3–4.

⁸ Bruining, *Alle redelijk geloof* 6, quoting part of a letter from Van der Wyck: 'Par rapport à la lecture, je ne lis rien depuis deux ans. Je ne brûlerai pas mes livres; mais je ne les verrai pas. J'ai beaucoup lu sur la Métaphysique: mais elle me déplaît par son incertitude. J'aime mieux l'Histoire, La Morale, les droits de l'humanité, que toutes les autres études

We find Van der Wyck active again as a member of the Society for the Promotion of True Religion, Virtue, Arts, and Sciences, founded about 1794 by Servaas van de Graaff, a clerck who worked in various places in Brabant. This Society had international ambitions and included several prominent members, including the Patriot Pieter Vreede. Gerbrand Bruining, a Remonstrant minister at the time, was among its members. The 'true religion' the Society wanted to promote was in fact deism, as opposed to all forms of deceit, ignorance and superstition.⁹ As we will see, however, Van der Wyck was to take an even more radical stand. The Society is said to have counted about 150 members, although some of them, as it turned out, had been enlisted without their own knowledge. Sadly, the Society with its high aspirations petered out after a short time. What remained was a number of modest publications, most of them poorly printed by Van Dieren at Grave, the very printer who published Van der Wyck's *Imitation of the Praise of Folly*.¹⁰ One of these publications is Van der Wyck's *Essay on the ingenuity of the honest man surpassing that of the impostor*.¹¹ In his dedication to the Society which had been so kind as to offer him its membership, he presented himself as an autodidact (3–4). Although he mentions quite a number of names, mostly philosophers, he is of the opinion that one should read little, but thoroughly, combining it with healthy manual labour (81). Van der Wyck's essay, ending with the translation of four of Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (84–96) informs us about, among other things, his political opinions, but I will restrict myself here to two passages that may remind us of his *Imitation of the Praise of Folly* which was to appear two years later. These are the passages in which he reveals his dislike of metaphysical speculations (32) and 'supernatural lies' (51), and points out that immutable Nature is the ultimate reality and the sole basis of morality (3, 51). Elsewhere he observes that some may consider a person wise whom others see as foolish; on the other hand, people often

ensemble. – Réfléchir m'est très-nuisible. Ecrire une lettre me fait beaucoup de tort. Et comme je voudrais volontiers guérir ma tête, je vous prie instamment, de ne me pas écrire de grandes lettres'.

⁹ See *Uitnodiging door het Genootschap ter bevordering van waare godsdienst, deugd, kunst en wetenschap aan alle deugdelievende menschen* (Grave, Adrianus van Dieren: 20 October 1796).

¹⁰ For this Society (*Genootschap ter bevordering van waaren godsdienst, deugd, kunst en wetenschap*), see Gestel P. Van, "Dutch reactions to Thomas Paine's *Age of reason*", *Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century* 378 (1999) (271–301) 294–300.

¹¹ *Proef over het vernuft des eerlyken boven den bedrieger* (Grave, Adrianus van Dieren: 1797).

think someone foolish who in fact is wiser than they ever will be (62). This remark may serve as a fitting introduction to Van der Wyck's *Imitation*.

What does this small booklet (2+48 pp.) look like? To begin with, it is about 75% shorter than the *Praise of Folly*. Moreover, after a short preface the text is divided into 144 sections, ranging from three to twenty lines. By contrast, Erasmus's *Folly* contains a continuous text; as is well-known, the division into 68 chapters we are familiar with was introduced only in the eighteenth century.¹² In Erasmus's book Dame Folly praises herself, but Van der Wyck does not adopt this literary device.

In the preface Van der Wyck informs us that before this *Imitation* he had published four titles (one of them being his *Essay*), in which he presented his views of society, government and education. Should the reader come across contradictions within and between his writings – well, these were also to be found in authors such as Grotius, Locke, Rousseau and Erasmus. Van der Wyck observes that contradictions might be explained by the fact that sometimes he focuses on what *ought to be*, and sometimes on what *is*. It is not only the author who is responsible for these contradictions, Van der Wyck states, but also 'mankind and the universe'. I shall presently return to Van der Wyck's concept of the universe.

In the first section of his *Imitation* Van der Wyck announces that he is going to use Erasmus's material, but not without combining it with his own.

All those who undertake to praise mankind will, just like Erasmus, have to speak highly of folly, which he took as the goddess of his poem. I want to imitate him, building from his materials; however, I do not wish to tie myself to his *Praise of Folly* in such a way that I am not adding something of my own. I shall not differ much from him, *since I am of his opinion* (1).¹³

Obviously, he considers himself to be a kindred spirit to Erasmus – an assessment to which we shall return below. Towards the end of his booklet Van der Wyck notes that it was inspired both by Erasmus's description of Folly and by the follies he himself was confronted with day by day (44). Unsurprisingly, then, we find quite a few references to contemporary life

¹² I will use this division for practical reasons (abbreviated as ch.).

¹³ 'Allen die het onderneemen het menschedom te pryzen, zullen gelyk Erasmus groot ophef der zothed moeten maken, die haar tot godin van zyn gezang nam. Ik wil hem navolgen, van zyne stoffen bouwen, tog wil ik my zo zeer niet aan zyn lof der zothed binden, dat ik 'er niet wat van het myne ondermenge. Ik zal met hem niet veel verschillen, dewyl ik van zyne gedagten ben' (my italics).

and thought. Where Erasmus complains about the useless quibbles of the medieval Realists, Nominalists, Thomists, Albertists, Occamists and Scotists (*Moria*, ch. 53), Van der Wyck adds dozens of other names, such as the seventeenth-century Arminians and Gomarists, Voetians and Coccejans, and moreover the Deists (*Godisten*), Atheists (*Ongodisten*), Materialists, Naturalists etc. of his own day (28). In the field of philosophy he mentions the followers of Descartes and Hobbes, among others. With respect to politics he refers to Jacobins, Terrorists and Moderates. It should be remembered that when Van der Wyck published his *Imitation* the French Revolution had taken place only nine years earlier; the Batavian Republic in the Netherlands was proclaimed in 1795. The separation of church and state came about in 1796; as a consequence the printing of antireligious books became much easier. Without any doubt Van der Wyck welcomed these developments, although he raised his voice against those who under the pretext of Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood deceitfully promoted nothing but their own interest (33).¹⁴

In thus adapting the text of his sixteenth-century model Van der Wyck wanted to follow in Erasmus's footsteps. Often, however, he did it in such a way that Erasmus would have been shocked. This will become particularly clear when we compare Folly's criticism of church and religion with Van der Wyck's more radical treatment of religious matters.

In Erasmus's *Moria* we come across caustic remarks about useless quibbling about the relation between the three Persons of the Trinity (c. 54; *ASD* IV-3, 164.598–610), or the exact manner in which Christ is present in the bread and wine of the Eucharist (c.53; *ASD* IV-3, 146.398; 150.426–432). From what we know of Erasmus's other works we may safely say that he is not hiding behind Folly here; he seems to forget his *persona*. Neither here under the guise of Folly, nor elsewhere does Erasmus reject the Catholic tradition concerning the Trinity and the Eucharist. However, he feels that hairsplitting discussions on these topics can only lead to useless quarrels without in any sense contributing to piety or a Christian life. We may well be curious to know what Van der Wyck is making of this. First of all, he does not ridicule disputations on the Trinity so much as the concept of a Trinity as such. In the vein of an eighteenth-century *philosophe* he observes that priests have learned so little arithmetic as to say that 'three is one' (33, cf. 18). And, he adds sarcastically, with the theologians bread

¹⁴ See also his *Essay* (57) on those democrats who dishonestly flatter the people.

and wine are flesh and blood,¹⁵ and a woman made pregnant is an immaculate virgin (27). Erasmus could never have gone this far, since he believed in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist;¹⁶ he believed that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, and even that the conception of the Virgin Mary herself had been free from original sin (immaculate conception).¹⁷

Van der Wyck rejects not only the Church (20), but also Christianity itself as well as any other religion. In his eyes books on astrology, chiromancy, and witchcraft belong to the same category as the Edda, the Indian Vedas, the Talmud, the Quran and the Bible. Why should God need any revelations, whether through books, through deceivers or exegetes, or through sons such as Jesus or Mancu Capac (the legendary founder of the Inca empire)? (29). As a purely human being, however, Van der Wyck does not criticize Jesus, judging by this statement:

Just as black, white and incarnadine are conflicting, they [the theologians] fall into inconsistency; they cling to externals instead of love, Jesus' doctrine; they spread hatred, envy, and murder (32).¹⁸

By stating that God does not need any intermediaries Van der Wyck seems to assume that God exists. However, taking the context into account we must conclude that he meant: *if* there were a God he could have revealed himself without the help of books or holy persons.

Van der Wyck dislikes everything that pretends to be supernatural. Characteristically, in summing up the follies people believe in, he groups together

God and heaven, the devil with his hell, seraphim and cherubim, satans of varying rank, ghosts, witches, sorcery, metempsychosis, [the idea] that

¹⁵ Cf. for instance Bernier Abbé [= Holbach Paul Henri Thiry., baron d'], "Sens commun", in *Théologie portative ou Dictionnaire abrégé de la Religion chrétienne* (London [=Amsterdam], Marc Michel Rey: 1768) 209 (s.v. Sens commun): 'Un bon chrétien doit captiver son entendement pour le soumettre à la foi, et si son curé lui dit que trois ne sont qu'un, ou que Dieu est du pain, il est obligé de l'en croire en dépit du sens commun'. Cf. 226 (s.v. Unité): 'D'après les équations algébriques de nos théologiens, un est égal à trois, et trois égal à un. Quiconque ne se rend point à l'évidence de ce calcul manque assurément de foi et mérite d'être brûlé'.

¹⁶ Cf. Payne J.B., *Erasmus. His theology of the sacraments* (s.l.: 1970) 136–154.

¹⁷ Cf. Halkin L.-E., "La mariologie d'Erasmus", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 68 (1977) (32–54) 39–43 [reprinted in idem, *Erasmus. Sa pensée et son comportement* (London: 1988), no. VI, 32–54].

¹⁸ 'gelyk zwart, wit en gloeyend rood te samen stryden, zo vervallen zy ook in tegenstrydigheid, in plaats der liefde, leer van Jesus, hangen zy zig aan uiterlykheden, verspreiden haat, nyd en moord'. Cf. note 38 below on Jesus's 'merciful words' on the cross.

death is life, and similar nonsense filling the human hearts with pride, lies, hatred and envy (29).¹⁹

In other words: 'belief' and 'superstition' are equal to him, or rather, all belief is superstition. To Van der Wyck, religion has only unfavourable aspects, as it is a source of hatred and envy. For him there is but one ultimate reality: eternal matter. 'The essence is matter in general; accident its alteration or change' (31).²⁰ Or: 'matter, motion, change and fate are the cause of all' (14;²¹ cf. 40–42). The universe is eternal, not created (40–42). Similar ideas were already circulating in the Netherlands at the end of the seventeenth century, reaching a wider audience in the next decades, even outside the scholarly world. Van der Wyck feels apparently at home in the radical, strongly anti-religious wing of the Enlightenment.²² This makes us the more curious about his interpretation of the final part of the *Moria*.

The radical major could have disregarded this final part as being too religious, but he prefers to adapt it in his own way. Where the *Moria* praises pious folly or mystical ecstasy, Van der Wyck does not follow his model. Let me give two examples. First, in order to demonstrate that the Christian faith has 'a certain affinity with some sort of folly' Erasmus's Dame Folly observes that

children, old people, women, and retarded persons are more delighted than others with holy and religious matters and hence are always nearest to the altar, simply out of a natural inclination.

About those who have been completely taken away by devotion to Christ, the *Moria* tells us:

They throw away their possessions, ignore injuries, allow themselves to be deceived, make no distinction between friend and foe, shudder at the thought of pleasure, find satisfaction in fasts, vigils, tears, and labours, shrink from life, desire death above all else – in short, they seem completely devoid

¹⁹ 'Hier komt God en hemel, de duivel met zyn hel; seraphynen en cherubynen, satans van verscheidenen rang, spoken, hexen, tovery, ziels verhuizing; dat dood leven zy, en diergelyke narreklap, die de menschelyke harten met trots, leugen, haat en nyd vervullen'.

²⁰ 'Het wezen is de stof in het algemeen, het toeval zyne wyziging, of zyne verandering'.

²¹ 'Neen stof, beweging, verandering, noodlot zyn van alles oorzaak'.

²² See Israel J.I., *Radical Enlightenment. Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (Oxford: 2001) 322–323, 708–709 and passim.

of natural human responses, just as if their minds were living somewhere else, not in their bodies' (c. 66).²³

Van der Wyck summarizes these passages in six lines. He, too, mentions children, old people and retarded persons, but he adds a new category, 'superstitious, stupid peasants'. These peasants tolerate being beaten and kicked, and are addicted to poverty and fanaticism (39). Thus, what in the *Moria* are examples of pious folly have now become signs of deplorable stupidity. In this way Van der Wyck has turned Erasmus's text into a piece of typical Enlightenment criticism of stupidity, superstition and fanaticism.

A second example. The *Moria* compares the madness of lovers, living as it were outside themselves, with the life of the pious. They will enjoy eternal happiness after death; however, they may sometimes already experience on earth 'a certain flavour and odour of that reward' – in the words of the prophet 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has the heart of man conceived what things God has prepared for those who love him' (Isaiah 64:4; 1 Corinthians 2:9).²⁴ Van der Wyck paraphrases the same text, but comments upon it as follows: 'God has never clearly made known his presence; it is their own mind that bears witness to it (40)'.²⁵ He goes on to explain what atheists believe, namely only what they can see, hear or feel.²⁶ This is without any doubt Van der Wyck's own conviction, too.

The reworking of the final part of the *Moria* takes up sections 132–135 in Van der Wyck's Imitation. Here he could have put down his pen, but yet continues, probably because there remained some blank pages to fill. Thus, drawing on the works of Montesquieu, Boulanger,²⁷ and Robertson²⁸ he presents a picture of what he considers to be cruel, absurd, and obscene customs and traditions from other times and places. 'Now one can see', he observes sarcastically, 'what sweet animals God's images are' (43).²⁹

²³ Miller Clarence H. (transl.), Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly* (New Haven-London: 1979) 132; ASD IV-3 189.144–146 and 189.149–190.153.

²⁴ C. 67; Miller, *Praise of Folly* 136–137; ASD IV-3 192–193.

²⁵ 'God gaf nooit duidlyk bescheid dat hy er was, het is hun geest die het hen getuigt'.

²⁶ 'De atheïst gelooft niet dan het geen hy ziet, voelt of hoort'.

²⁷ Nicolas Antoine Boulanger (1722–1759), author of works such as *Recherches sur l'origine du despotisme oriental* and *L'antiquité dévoilée par ses usages*. His works, in six vols. were published in Amsterdam in 1794. Under Boulanger's name Holbach published the notorious *Le christianisme dévoilé, ou Examen des principes et des effets de la religion chrétienne* (London [= Amsterdam]: 1767).

²⁸ William Robertson (1721–1793). Van der Wyck may have in mind his *History of America* (1777); a Dutch translation appeared in Amsterdam 1778.

²⁹ '[...] tonen welke lieve beesjes Gods-beeltenissen zyn'.

His tone becomes more relaxed when he turns to two works he greatly admires: Cervantes's *Don Quichote* and Ludwig Holberg's *Subterranean Journey of Niels Klim*. The latter work by the 'Danish Erasmus' enjoyed great popularity in the eighteenth century; the Dutch nineteenth-century literary critic Conrad Busken Huet called it a witty imitation of the *Praise of Folly*.³⁰ These added pages (comprising sections 136–144) are only loosely related to the *Moria*, but Van der Wyck links them to the main part of his *Imitation* by concluding: 'So Folly is praised until the end of my work and in immeasurable infinity and eternity' (47).³¹

We may conclude that Van der Wyck's fundamental ideas are diametrically opposed to those of Erasmus. Over and against Erasmus, the biblical humanist advocating a spiritual form of Christianity, stands Van der Wyck, the enlightened materialist and atheist. It is striking, however, that Van der Wyck radically transforms – or, one might say, deforms – the *Moria* without in any respect distancing himself from Erasmus. On the contrary, he considers himself a kindred spirit to Erasmus ('I am of his opinion').³² How is this to be explained?

First, we should keep in mind that to this very day many freethinkers have been in sympathy with Erasmus, so Van der Wyck is no exception. Needless to say that the name 'Erasmus' stands for the author of the *Moria*. His many other works mostly regarding Bible, Church and religion, are usually not taken into account. What made the *Moria* attractive to freethinkers such as van der Wyck was Erasmus's critical mind, his satirizing of superstitious practices and futile disputations.

This leads me to a second remark. In his *Ecstasy and the Praise of Folly*,³³ Michael Screech argues in favour of the deeply religious character of the *Moria* by focusing on its usually neglected final part. Many scholars have agreed with this assessment; Léon Halkin went so far as to call the *Moria* 'a religious pamphlet'.³⁴ Some others, however, observe that Screech exaggerates the 'mystical' aspects of the *Moria*, taking the final part too

³⁰ *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum* (1741); translated into Dutch in the same year. Cf. Ferwerda S., *Holberg in Holland* (Zutphen: 1939) 13, 136 sqq., 219, 226–227.

³¹ 'Zothoid word dan tot op het eind van myn werk en tot in onmeetbare eindeloosheid en eeuwigheid geprezen'.

³² See above, p. 000.

³³ London: 1980; repr. 1988.

³⁴ Halkin L.-E., *Erasmé parmi nous* (Paris: 1987), title ch. IX: 'un pamphlet religieux. L'Eloge de la Folie'.

seriously, having too little attention for the 'register', the tone in which Erasmus wrote his satire. Thus A.H.T. Levi remarks:

It is difficult not to take seriously the praise of Christian folly in the final section of the *Folly*, but it is also difficult even after reading Screech, to believe Erasmus did not enjoy playing with concepts like rapture and ecstasy in only semi-serious support of a serious ideal. Even here Folly remembered who she was, spoke on two levels at once, and parodied herself by also being serious.³⁵

Jean-Claude Margolin argues that Screech would be right if one could identify Folly's final message with Erasmus's deepest convictions, but this would be an 'incorrect extrapolation'.³⁶ One might perhaps argue that the case for Screech's opponents can be corroborated by the striking fact that through the ages the *Moria* has been read as a playful and satirical work rather than a religious pamphlet. It is noteworthy that when Gerbrand Bruining published his refutation of Van der Wyck's booklet in 1799 he restricted himself to vehemently opposing the latter's atheism. He did this by quoting extensively from contemporary representatives of a *Christian Enlightenment* such as the educator Christian Gotthilf Salzmann (1744–1811).³⁷ On one occasion Bruining observes that a certain statement is not to be found in Erasmus's text.³⁸ However, this is no more than a passing remark. Bruining nowhere takes the opportunity to point out that the gist of Erasmus's *Moria* differs completely from that of Van der Wyck's adaptation. He would certainly have done so if he had seen the *Moria* as a primarily religious work.

³⁵ *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 october 1980 [= review of Screech's *Ecstasy*].

³⁶ 'Si l'on veut identifier le message final de la Folie à la pensée profonde d'Erasmus, on pourra effectivement donner raison à Screech [...]. Il y aurait pourtant là extrapolation abusive', Margolin J.-Cl., "Erasmus et le silence", in Castex P.-G. (ed.), *Mélanges sur la littérature de la Renaissance à la mémoire de V.-L. Saulnier* (Geneva: 1984) [reprinted in Margolin J.-C., *Erasmus: le prix des mots et de l'homme* (London: 1986), no. VIII] 176–177. Cf. also Bietenholz P.G., *Encounters with a radical Erasmus. Erasmus' work as a source of radical thought in early modern Europe* (Toronto: 2009) 132–133.

³⁷ *De hemel op aarde* (Amsterdam, Matthijs Schalekamp: 1798); original title *Der Himmel auf Erden* (1797).

³⁸ Bruining, *Alle redelijk geloof* 19, referring to Van der Wyck, *Navolging* 39, which is based on a passage from the end of *Moria* c. 66, about Jesus on the cross praying: 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing' (*Luke* 23:24; ASD IV-3 188.130–133) – 'merciful words' (*barmhartige woorden*) according to Van der Wyck. He adds, however, that Jesus was not able to perform any miracle and that he blamed his Father for having abandoned him. Bruining does not agree and feels that this testifies to the 'present weakness of your intellect' (*de tegenwoordige zwakheid van Uw denkvermogen*).

This *consensus* of readers should not be dismissed too easily. Admittedly, this is a typically 'Erasmian' argument and certainly not decisive. It cannot refute Screech's thesis, but may put it into perspective. Otherwise we have to assume that the readers' responses (showing almost a *consensus quinquesaecularis*) are the result of a colossal misunderstanding. Van der Wyck's case is an extreme one, since he goes in a direction wholly different from Erasmus while seeing himself at the same time as a kindred spirit. That is why his case is highly instructive. One might argue that van der Wyck misunderstood the *Moria*. On the other hand, however, one could observe that the *Moria* is apparently a work which such rich potential as to enable Van der Wyck to adapt it in an amazingly radical way. This may teach us not to overlook the subversive aspects of the *Moria*.

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